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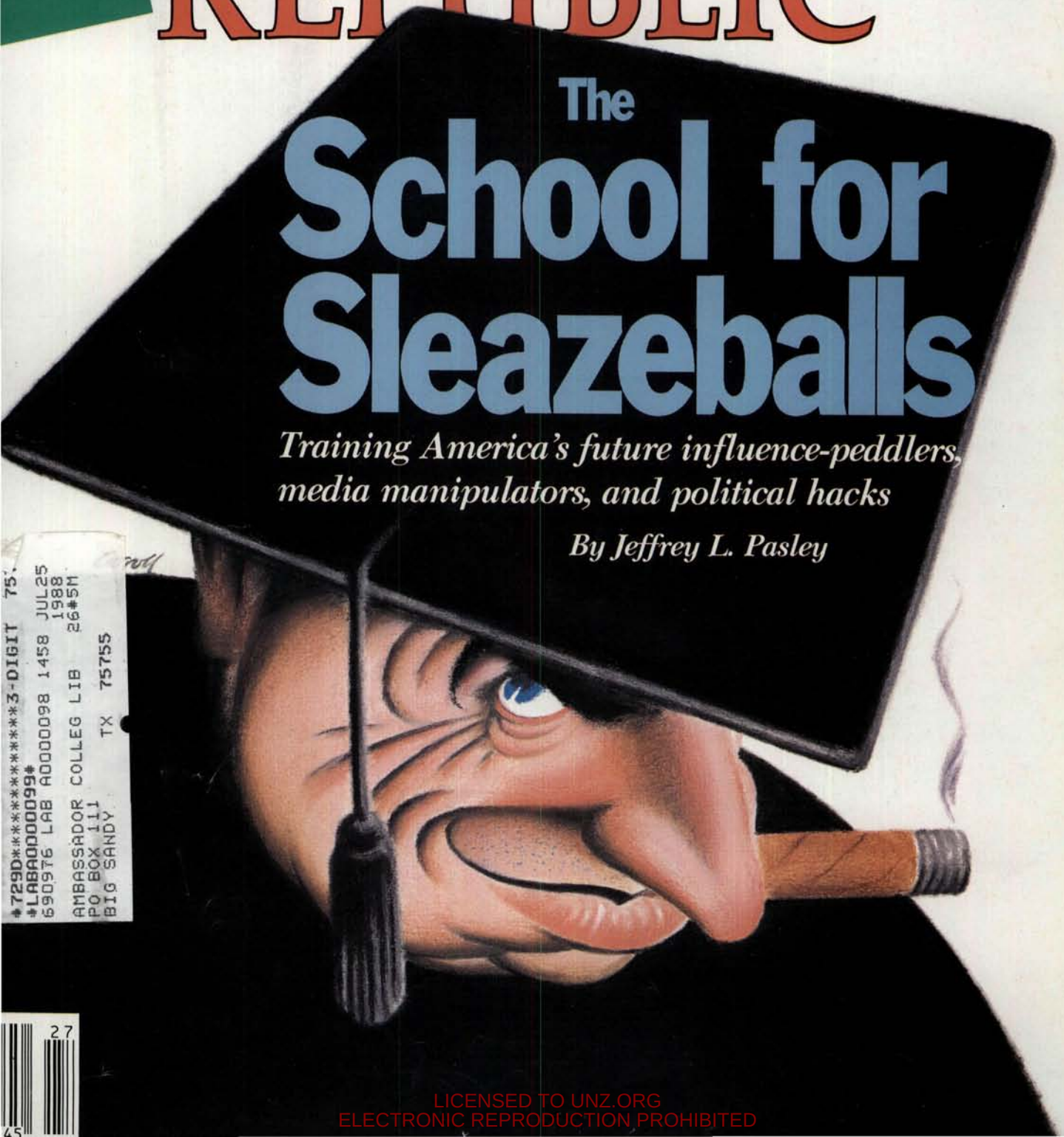

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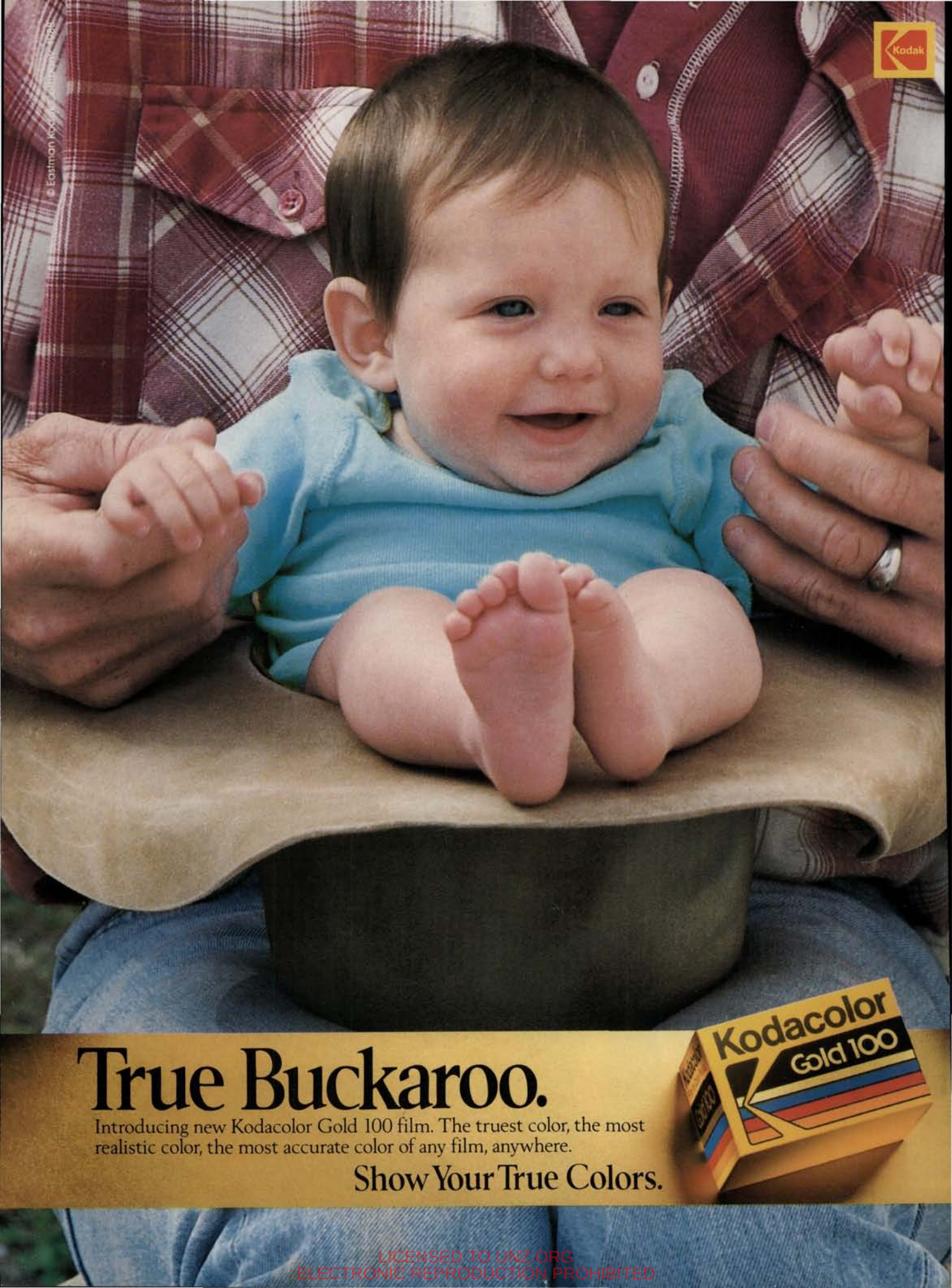
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FOUNDED 1914 — *A Weekly Journal of Opinion* — ISSUE 3,833

WASHINGTON, D.C. — JULY 4, 1988

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# CORRESPONDENCE

## PATENTLY ABSURD

*To the editors:*

Your editorial on animal patenting ("What Price Mighty Mouse?" May 23) struck me as a frivolous and naive analysis of this most pressing issue. The fact alone that U.S. Patent Office head Donald Quigg had to assure Americans that "the agency will not patent human beings" attests to the degree of concern and deserved fear that animal patenting creates. Indeed, the notion of window-cleaning chimpanzees—which you find so titillatingly humorous—was suggested when a research scientist recently proposed that chimpanzees be crossbred with humans (via genetic engineering) to produce a race of anthropoid slaves.

It is almost unforgivable to suggest that since humans decided to abuse animals long ago, we should now have the license to abuse them even more by creating patentable and grotesque new lifeforms. The idea, since you apparently do not know, is rather to make our treatment of animals *more* humane. And please reconsider your ignorant statement that creating new organisms by genetic engineering is not morally different from creating them by inbreeding techniques. If not morally different qualitatively, it is quite different quantitatively.

There is no evidence whatsoever that restraint would be exercised if, in a few years, there was evidence of biotechnological cruelty to animals. Look at what was tolerated in biomedical and psychological research until purloined information resulted in laboratories being closed down. And look at the atrocities going on at stockyards and slaughterhouses because no laws protect the animals.

The passing of small, self-sufficient farms will not result in the feeding of more people. It will result in increases in factory farming, harvesting of animals for food, world pollution, and world starvation. This is the ethic you espouse, and these are the results you are ready to accept.

MURRY J. COHEN, M.D.
*New York, New York*

*To the editors:*

You have done your readers a disservice when you reduce genetic engineering to a question of humane treatment of animals. The use of genetic engineering techniques raises serious questions that deserve serious debate. What are the risks of releasing new or modified species into the environment? Which traits should be emphasized in a program of genetic "enhancement"? What are the implications of the uses of genetic engineering techniques for biological warfare? What sorts of accidents are possible and what can be done to prepare for them? What risks are acceptable?

After a brief flirtation with social responsibility, scientists interested in genetic engineering have generally retreated from the messy arena of public policy formulation and tried to extinguish the public debate about possible risks. For example, Nobel Prize-winning biochemist James Watson expressed the desire to characterize all opponents of genetic engineering as "scaremongers [who] are an odd coalition of spaced-out environmental kooks and leftists who see genetics as a tool for further enslaving the masses." Unfortunately, scientists are not necessarily qualified to assess risks or determine appropriate public policy. When the possibility of atom bombs was first discussed, another Nobel scientist, Robert Millikan, believed that such a thing was highly unlikely ever to be built! Millikan assured the public that it may "sleep in peace with the consciousness that the Creator has put some foolproof elements into his handiwork, and that man is powerless to do it any titanic physical damage."

LESLIE GLUSTROM
*Prescott, Arizona*

## ABORTION EDUCATION

*To the editors:*

In response to Charles Fager ("Fetal Distraction," May 30), the pro-lifers' driving force is conscience, not formal legality, and their mission is to allow completely unsuspecting victims a chance at life. The idea of a persuasionist tactic to delegitimize abortion analogous to that used against smoking and AIDS is logically flawed. The reason for the apparent success of the latter is that they appeal to the egos of the target groups, who themselves will suffer real pain and abbreviated lives. But the target group of anti-abortion persuasion would be those who consent and submit to an act to relieve their own distress while they abort the lives of others. In this age of "victims' rights," there is no social act that ravages a more helpless victim. The pro-lifers seek to raise our sights higher than the merely empirical, utilitarian, and ego-centered.

JOHN SCHWANE
*Broken Arrow, Oklahoma*

*To the editors:*

Charles Fager calls for the government to "delegitimize" abortion by, among other things, "educating Americans to stop resorting to abortion," citing the success of educational efforts in reducing smoking and slowing the spread of AIDS. I doubt whether those successes can be transferred to the abortion "problem." Educating people about the alternatives to abortion is a reasonable option—and should be encouraged. But objective educational programs that present a broader choice should not be confused with government-sponsored anti-abortion propaganda. An educational program must not be founded solely upon the goal of reducing abortion. The problem with abortion education is that there is simply too little to teach. Most of the persuasive arguments against abortion are founded on controversial or highly personal judgments that are hardly textbook material and that should never be taught as unquestionable fact.

PATCHEN MARKELL
*El Cerrito, California*

## THE MISSION

*To the editors:*

As a first-year student at Yale School of Organization and Management, I can safely say that SOM does have its problems. Nonetheless, Michael M. Lewis might have expended a little more energy on digging into what really goes on at SOM rather than turning his article into a critique of our p.r. department ("Bulldog Bull," May 23). If he had spoken to a greater number of students (he includes only one rather inane student quotation), I am sure he would have concluded that there is indeed something unique going on at Yale. Take for example our internship fund. Every year first-year students raise funds to help place about 25 percent of our classmates in summer jobs with public or non-profit sector organizations that need interns but lack resources. In addition to foundation grants, the fund relies heavily on and receives contributions from literally every student in the first-year class. Mr.

*continued on page 42*



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# "INVALUABLE"

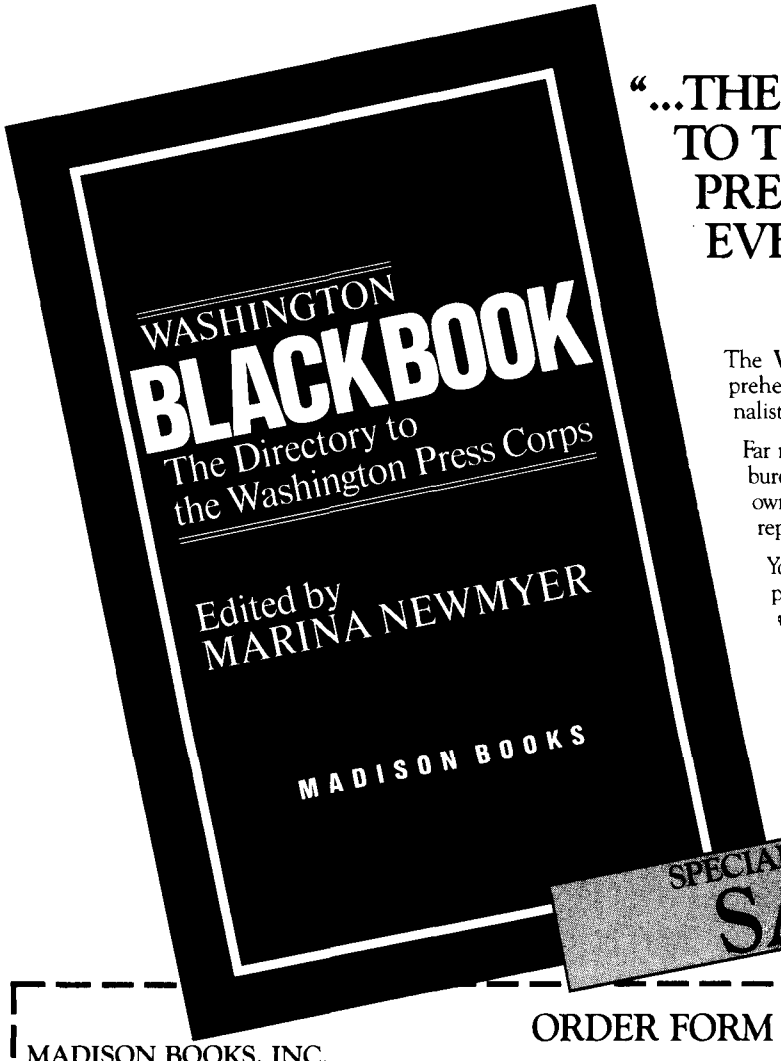
Howard Banks,
Washington Bureau Chief, Forbes

# "DEFINITIVE"

John Limpert,
Editor, The Washingtonian

# "INDISPENSABLE"

Jonathan Jessar,
Executive V.P., Burson-Marsteller, Inc.

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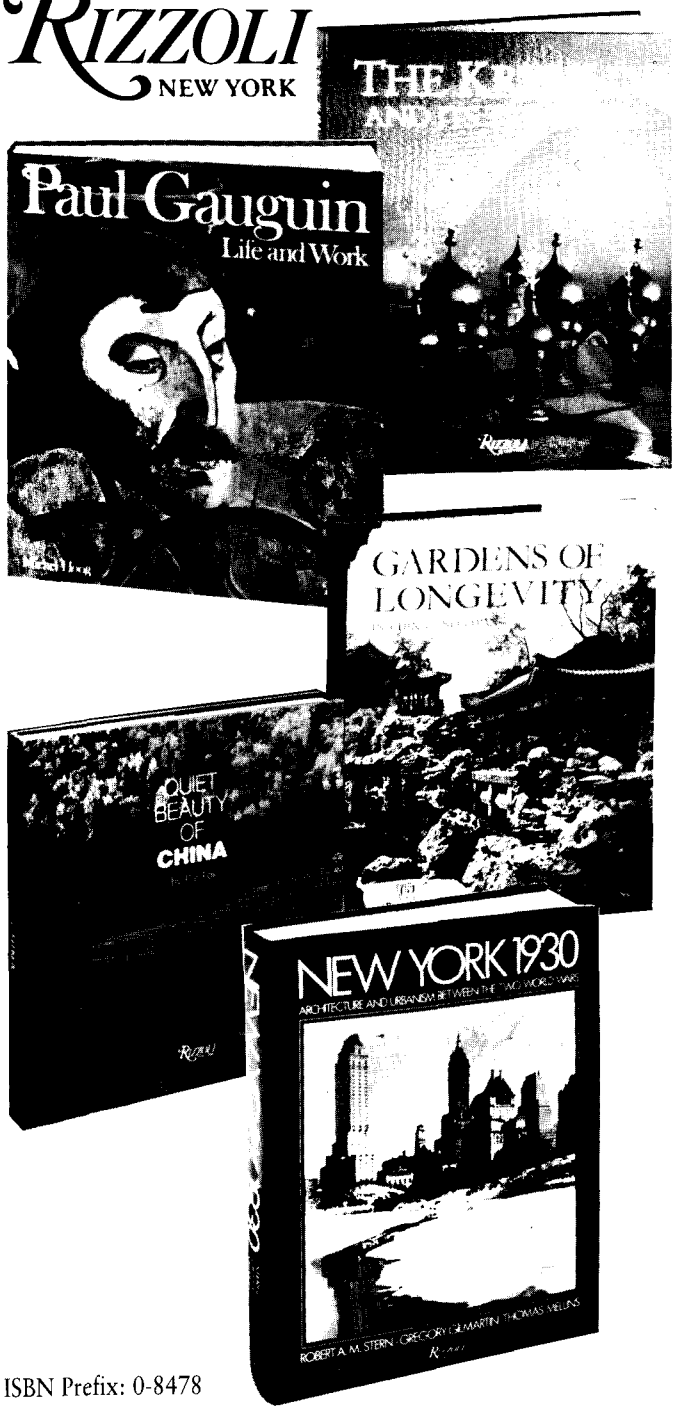
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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JULY 4, 1988

# CENTRAL AMERICA WILL NOT HOLD

The Reagan administration has behaved arrogantly, unilaterally, and at times even illegally in conducting Central America policy. The next administration ought to learn from its mistakes—by building trust between the executive branch and Congress instead of suspicion; by consulting with other nations in the hemisphere rather than ignoring them or treating them like children; by relying to the maximum extent possible on aboveboard methods rather than covert operations to pursue America's interests; above all, by obeying the law.

That said, the administration's goals were laudable—preventing Nicaragua from establishing itself as base camp for Communist subversion of the region, and moving the traditionally repressive military dictatorships of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala in the direction of democracy as the only long-term means of containing radical revolution.

Until February 4 of this year, when Congress cut off military aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*, the first goal was being achieved, albeit bloodily and messily. The *contras* had about 10,000 troops in the field. They were waging active war against the Sandinistas and expanding their areas of popular support. And inside Nicaragua there were signs of deep discontent with Sandinista rule, in the form of draft riots and labor unrest. Even if the *contras* could not have won an outright military victory, they had prevented the Sandinistas from subverting neighboring countries, and they had established a strong position for forcing political reform.

The second goal—gradual democratization of the region—also was being achieved, albeit slowly, fitfully, and inadequately. El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala all are more democratic and less brutal places than they were in 1981. They *have* civilian governments, and a base is established for the expansion of liberty. The Reagan administration, with its reputation for hard-line anti-communism, has had credibility with Latin military leaders and has used it to urge them—in their own interest—to avoid atrocities against civilians and coups against civilian government.

Now, however, America's ability to achieve both of its goals is severely in doubt. The Sandinistas have skillfully exploited political divisions in the United States and are using the peace process led by Costa Rican president Oscar Arias to drag out negotiations with the *contras* until the Reagan administration is out of office. Then, almost surely, they will revert to form and consolidate a Leninist dictatorship, a Marxist economy, and a menacing, Soviet-financed military force.

The United States' failure to accomplish its aim in Nicaragua has had damaging reverberations. Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega would have been a tough nut to crack in any event, especially with the Pentagon and State Department fighting among themselves over how to oust him. But after Congress showed that President Reagan could be made a paper tiger, Noriega had every reason to continue treating him as such. The humiliating defeat of U.S. policy in Panama and Nicaragua is bound to undercut U.S. persuasiveness with the military in other neighboring countries. Twice within the past year the administration



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has helped block military coups against President Vinicio Cerezo in Guatemala, but U.S. officials are worried that another attempt to dispense with civilian rule there could come at any time.

In El Salvador, too, the prestige of the United States is at a low ebb, and violence by the far left and the far right is on the upswing. For 1988 the rate of killing of civilians is 34 per month, up from 27 per month in 1987 (though still far below the average of 800 in 1981). Although leftish human rights groups such as Americas Watch tend to blame the army and the government for atrocities, independent observers such as Douglas Payne of Freedom House note that the Communist FMLN is responsible for at least half of the casualties, including the assassinations of mayors and human rights leaders.

According to Payne, the left and right share the goal of eliminating U.S. influence. "The hard right thinks that if the military is unstrapped from the rules for low-intensity warfare imposed by the United States, it can win. The FMLN thinks that U.S. influence is kaput, and the more it can polarize things, the better chance it has to win." Payne thinks the levels of violence of 1980-82 could return.

The Reagan administration thinks that the center can hold, especially if the country's dying president, José Napoleón Duarte, has the strength to rally his countrymen and his Christian Democratic Party around the cause of democracy that he has served so heroically throughout his life. The administration expects that its favorite, former Planning Minister Fidel Chavez Mena, will emerge as the Christian Democratic nominee for president and can win next year's election against the right-wing ARENA party. ARENA itself has reformed and democratized, and is no longer entwined at the top with ruthless death squads. In the countryside, however, that separation is far from complete.

What's most required in American policy toward El Salvador is perseverance, a quality frequently lacking among American politicians. Liberals in Congress, especially, somehow expect one of the world's most violent cultures

# THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

| This Week | | Last Week | Weeks on Chart |
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| 7. | A HOME IS NOT A HOUSE | — | 1 |
| 8. | SEE NO EVIL | * | 3 |
| 9. | SEVERED SAMURAI | — | 1 |
| 10. | PAY HEY! | — | 1 |

**1. DAN & TED & GEORGE & MALICE**

*Campaign '88.* Never mind Bush's effort to position Dukakis as Sacco & Vanzetti—give the veep's own schweppervescence a chance to grow on you. The man's bumblings seem irresistibly Wodehousian; if he doesn't find a Jeeves for his veep, he's missing a bet. He really can Point with Pride to Peace and Prosperity, but who thinks he had anything to do with it?

**2. NUMBER OUR DAYS**

*AIDS.* How do you like these AIDS numbers out of Stockholm? A new U.S. case every 14 minutes? Some places doubling their totals annually? AIDS in mother's milk? AIDS in hiding? Is your suppressed interest (read: fear) reawakening? Let's put it this way: if the Masters & Johnson book came out next week, would it still be dismissed by an anti-hysterical press?

**3. AUTHOR! AUTHOR!**

*Jim Wright.* Whoever told Jim Wright he should do a TV counteroffensive had to be a Republican. Wright's terrible on TV, coming across as insincere if not smarmy. He not only boosted the story, he showed squirming vulnerability. That's a red flag to the press bull. Wright might as well prepare for an onslaught every time an excuse presents itself.

**4. SOT WEED MALEFACTOR**

*Smoking.* The Cipollone verdict was mixed, but it's clear that smokers themselves are a bit less maligned these days, if they are not actually seen as victims. The villains, as this hysteria plays out, are the tobacco and ad industries, a view being fed by a book, *Merchants of Death.*

**5. THEY ALSO RUN**

*Veeps.* A lot of stupid angles get played in the course of our mercilessly long election season, but the most intolerably stupid is the parade of potential veeps. Nobody cares except the press, and it cares only because it might get another Eagleton, Dole, or Ferraro to mutilate. The whole endless veep story is a negative one: who can hurt whom, and how much.

**6. SIXTYSOMETHING**

*Elderly.* Something was missing from coverage of the Pepper bill: the usual mini-melodrama features about those in need of this particular social welfare legislation. Indeed, one heard much about the wealthy elderly's Social Security checks. A certain distaste for the elderly and their expensive needs is beginning to show itself. You wait until the boomers are on Social Security.

**7. A HOME IS NOT A HOUSE**

*Housing '88.* The housing story has bubbled over again, and it may stick around as a campaign issue. People can't afford a house unless they already have one. One trend is houses for "mingles," a group of single buyers. Are the feds going to fix this? Not likely. This is a "shrinking dream" story: in other words, decline.

**8. SEE NO EVIL**

*Soviet threat.* With the decline of a perceived Soviet threat, the U.S. is without a major international foe for the first time in generations. (Colombia doesn't count.) In news terms, however, a lack of conflict is unnatural; somebody's going to be cast in the bogeyman role. Trying out: loony Qaddafi, purportedly resuming his terrorist ways.

**9. SEVERED SAMURAI**

*Suzuki Samurais.* You don't detect any lip-smacking, Japan-bashing schadenfreude in reports of the Samurai's stability problems, do you? This is happening when Jeeps are trendy and Fords are zooming. Yuppies may still belong to the upscale imports, but Detroit (with protectionist help) has gone a long way toward winning back the middle class.

**10. PAY HEY!**

*Willie Mays.* Willie Mays's autograph-for-pay incident and Billy Martin's latest brawl played big because they contrast with a beloved American view: that ballplayers are oversize ten-year-olds. Humbug. They've always been beanball-throwing, high-spiking, bench-cussing drinkers, and they used to be worse than they are now. Say it ain't so if you like, but it's so.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.



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to be transformed overnight into a Latin version of Connecticut, and are ready to cut off aid if that does not happen. They, in turn, are badgered and propagandized by the far-left network of groups that raise funds and build support in the United States for the FMLN. Having defeated *contra* aid, the left is now turning its sights on military aid for El Salvador, hoping to undermine the regime and American influence, and force the government into negotiations leading to "power-sharing" with the Communists.

Fortunately, Michael Dukakis favors continued military aid to El Salvador—as long as progress in human rights is maintained—and so do most Democrats in Congress. Unfortunately, Congress has decided to try to cut the deficit at the expense of all Central American countries. The deepest cuts have been in aid for the countries that support Reagan policy in the region: El Salvador and Honduras. The smallest cuts have been for those that resist Reagan policy: Guatemala and Costa Rica. Last year aid to El Salvador was cut from $507 million to $381 million, while aid for Guatemala went from $178 million to $138 million. The same American lawyer who represents the Sandinista interests, Paul Reichler, also lobbies Congress for aid to Guatemala, probably the least reformed of all the right-wing Central American regimes.

Those who claim to want democracy in Central America—the Reagan administration, Congress, and Costa Rican president Oscar Arias—have allowed the Sandinistas to renege on promises they made under the Arias-sponsored peace accord. The Sandinistas have engaged in repeated human rights abuses—shutting down newspapers and radio stations, sending thugs to beat up opposition figures, eliminating the Justice Ministry and transferring the court system to the Interior Ministry, and killing at least two labor demonstrators—without a word of protest from Democratic leaders in Congress, from Arias, or from Arias's good friend, Michael Dukakis.

The administration has protested, of course, but it has failed—and so has Republican presidential candidate George Bush—to establish guideposts for judging Sandinista behavior under the Arias accords. A list of 33 such guideposts was adopted overwhelmingly by the House last year, but it has been all but forgotten. It includes the establishment of an independent judiciary, the separation of the Nicaraguan army from Sandinista party control, the release of political prisoners, the creation of independent television stations, establishing the right to strike, and allowing demonstrations by political groups.

Many of these demands are the basis of the *contras'* negotiating position in cease-fire talks with Sandinistas. They are entirely reasonable. In fact, they are essential to the kind of democracy the Sandinistas promised to create when they came to power in 1979 and again when they signed the Arias accords last year. Yet, when the *contras* asked for them to be included in a timetable for democracy to parallel a Sandinista timetable for *contra* disarmament and cease-fire, the Sandinistas accused the *contras* of undermining peace talks. The Sandinistas obviously think they need to grant no weakening of their grip on power, no real democracy, because they have beaten the *contras*—not on the battlefield, but in the Congress of the United States.

What is the United States going to do about this? What Congress should do is rise up in disgust at Sandinista violations and vote renewed military aid to the *contras*, cancelable only if there's real evidence of Sandinista progress toward democracy. However, Congress seems more dedicated to establishing peace—or rather, peace and quiet: a false, temporary, and despotic peace—than in demanding democracy. So the more realistic prospect is for a vote of humanitarian aid to be delivered to the *contras* inside Nicaragua, enabling them to stay alive as a potential fighting force. At the moment the Sandinistas are barring deliveries, so that *contra* troops need to flee to neighboring Honduras in order to eat.

Dukakis has adamantly opposed U.S. aid to the *contras*, calling it an immoral and illegal intervention in the internal affairs of another country. Bush has favored it, though it's not clear right now whether he—like some of President Reagan's advisers in the White House—wouldn't just as soon have the issue go away. Both of them ought to be required to tell voters how their policies would advance the causes of both peace and democracy in the region, and what guarantees they can offer that their policies won't lead to right-wing coups or radical takeovers.

At the moment the fragile movement toward democracy in Central America is threatened. That's partly the administration's fault and partly Congress's fault. But it is America's responsibility. This has happened before. In 1956 the United States overthrew a democratically elected government in Guatemala. In 1972 the United States averted its eyes when the Salvadoran military undid the results of a democratic election and sent Duarte into exile. Will this country once again let dictators and death squads rule the region, despite a demonstrated popular yearning for democracy? It could happen. Sadly, it may be in the process of happening right now.

# TRIAL BY FIRE

The conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinian Arabs often seems to be waged over the question: "Who loves the land most?" Over the centuries, the Arabs either neglected the land or abused it, as any number of travelers' accounts have testified. Whatever forests or woods remained standing were laid waste by the Ottomans. Zionist settlement brought a scientific program to redeem the soil. The reforestation of Palestine is, in fact, one of the earliest concrete achievements of the Jewish national renaissance. Nickels and dimes collected by Jewish children throughout the Diaspora paid for the seedlings planted by their pioneer kin. A tree became the symbol of the Jewish National Fund.

The Israelis apparently no longer revere the tree quite as



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much as they once did. Or at least the security services don't. To punish violent Palestinians, they have uprooted dozens of venerable olive trees from the craggy hills of the West Bank. It is a sullen and spiteful, if also surgical, kind of retribution. But it punishes the land as much as it does the people.

The Palestinian *intifada* (uprising) and its sympathizers among Israeli Arabs have, of course, a much more extreme form of ecocide. They are now on what is nothing less than a "scorched earth" policy—setting fires to destroy the forests and fields planted and nursed in the arid soil by Jews. This is not a new tactic. Palestinian Arabs have engaged in this sort of sabotage sporadically over the years, undoing Jewish efforts to reclaim the land from its desolation. But in the last month alone Palestinians have gone on an arson rampage and destroyed more than 100,000 dunams (25,000 acres), including several precious nature preserves, almost all of it in pre-1967 Israel and not the occupied territories. From the perspective of, let us say, California, 25,000 acres isn't a lot of land. But to a small country like Israel, it is enormous. Even the most dovish of Israelis will draw lessons from these episodes, and they will not be pleasant ones for the Arabs.

# NOTEBOOK

□ WRIGHT AND WRONG: The Ethics in Government Act established the institution of the special prosecutor (later rechristened "independent counsel") to investigate criminal charges against members of the executive branch. The idea was that an administration should not be expected to investigate—and, if necessary, prosecute—itself. The Reagan administration is challenging the constitutionality of the law. Meanwhile, Vice President Bush and Republicans on the Hill charge the Democratic Congress with hypocrisy for not applying the law to itself. In particular, they are demanding an independent counsel to investigate the charges against House Speaker Jim Wright. The charges against Wright are serious, as we indicated a couple of weeks ago ("Albatross," TNR, June 20). But this particular bit of Republican opportunism misses the point. If the House Ethics Committee wishes to hire an outsider to lead its investigation of whether Wright broke some congressional rules, that might be a good idea. An even better idea would be to extend to members of Congress and their aides the tougher conflict-of-interest rules (such as those in the Ethics in Government Act) that now apply only to the executive branch. However, there is nothing to stop the Justice Department from conducting a criminal investigation of Jim Wright, if such an investigation is warranted. And there is no reason to distrust its conclusions, as there would be if we had to rely on the Justice Department to investigate, say, Ed Meese. If they believed their own rap, Newt Gingrich et al. ought to be charging the Reagan Justice Department with dereliction of duty.

□ GOD AND MAN AT NEWSWEEK:

" '[Stephen] Hawking is an outstanding physicist,' said Steinhardt . . . , 'but he's not a god, he's a human being.' "

—*Newsweek*, June 13, page 59

" '[Perry] Ellis was a great talent, but he was a man, not a god,' says Moor."

—same magazine, same issue, page 70

(thanks to Paul Kellogg, New York, New York)

□ MOM AND POP AT NEWSWEEK:

"Despite all the fuss, the 'kids issue' . . . never seems to make a big difference in the present. Certainly it didn't in the '88 Democratic primaries. . . ."

—*Newsweek*, June 13, page 26

"At the same time, the Democratic primary campaigns focused largely on family issues."

—same magazine, same issue, page 30

(thanks to Rochel G. Teitz, Passaic, New Jersey)

□ EASY AS PI:

**Teen-Agers' Math Skills Add Up to Glum Report**

—*Washington Post*, June 8

***Back-to-Basics in Education Produces Gains in Arithmetic***

—*New York Times*, same day

(thanks to about a million readers)

□ FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, a jury has held a tobacco company liable for the harm caused by smoking. A New Jersey jury awarded Antonio Cipollone $400,000 for the death of his wife by lung cancer. Because the amount was relatively small and the verdict hopelessly confused, both the tobacco industry and anti-smoking activists have claimed victory. We have serious doubts whether private lawsuits are a sensible way to set social policy on a matter such as smoking. Among other anomalies, very few of the shareholders of the Ligget Group today—who will pay any damages—also were shareholders decades ago when Ligget allegedly enticed Mrs. Cipollone into her tobacco addiction with false health claims. That said, however, we couldn't help enjoying the tobacco companies' dilemma at the trial, where they were forced to mount a classic "borrowed pot" defense (named after the lawyer, defending a man charged with damaging a neighbor's pot, who argued that (a) his client never took the pot; (b) it was damaged when he took it; and (c) he returned it in perfect condition). According to the tobacco companies, (a) there is no



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proof smoking is bad for you; and (b) Mrs. Cipollone was perfectly aware that smoking is bad for you and did it anyway. Without conceding that smoking causes cancer, the companies also argued that (c) the cancer Mrs. Cipollone had is not the type caused by smoking. The only missing argument was (d) Mrs. Cipollone didn't die of cancer.

□ WHEEL ALIGNMENT:

**Vehicle Sales Up By 2.6%**

—*New York Times*, May 25

***U.S. Car Sales Fell 2.2% in Mid-May; Big Three Rebate Reductions Are Cited***

—*Wall Street Journal*, same day
(thanks to Patrick J. Flaherty, Hartford, Connecticut)

□ THE INSCRUTABLE MIDDLE EAST, I:

**Shultz Stays Optimistic as Shuttle Ends**

—*Washington Post*, June 8

***Shultz as Cassandra***

—*New York Times*, same day
(thanks to Rabbi Andrew Baker, Washington, D.C.)

□ THE INSCRUTABLE MIDDLE EAST, II:

**Persian Gulf states to subsidize PLO uprising**

—*Seattle Times*, June 9

***Arab Chiefs Rebuff P.L.O. on Uprising***

—*New York Times*, same day
(thanks to Jeanne Eisenberg, Seattle, Washington)

□ TATER TOTS:

***Moscow Rejects a Homeland for Tatars***

—*New York Times*, June 10

**Soviets Approve Tatars' Return to Homeland**

—*Los Angeles Times*, same day
(thanks to Stuart Silverstein, Los Angeles, California)

CORRECTIONS: Last week's Notebook item contrasting two *Washington Post* headlines—"ONCE REAGAN GOES, THE PARTY MAY BE OVER FOR THE GOP (July 1986), and "REAGAN'S DECLINE IS GOOD NEWS FOR THE GOP" (August 1987)—left out the best part: both headlines were over "Outlook" section essays by political guru Kevin Phillips. Also last week Fouad Ajami's new book, *Beirut: City of Regrets*, was incorrectly identified. Mr. Ajami's text accompanies 128 photographs by Eli Reed. And Melanie Billings-Yun's article "Viet Con" (May 2) contained a typographical error. The United States accepted 333 Vietnamese refugees from camps in Hong Kong last year, not 33.

## WHITE HOUSE WATCH

# NO LEGACY

DR. EVERETT KOOP, the surgeon general, and Gary Bauer, the White House domestic policy adviser, are not pals. Both work for President Reagan, but Koop is a favorite of Democratic liberals in Congress, Bauer an ally of New Right conservatives. The two fought bitterly over AIDS policy, and the ill will from that dispute lingers. But Koop and Bauer agree on abortion. They're fervently opposed. And so in January, Bauer arranged for Koop to commission a study of the psychological effects on women from having an abortion. The order came from Reagan, but the study was Bauer's idea. He figured that although the administration won't achieve major domestic policy breakthroughs in Reagan's waning days, it can make gains on the margin. One small gain, he concluded, would be an official report by Koop that said abortion is psychologically harmful.

In March Koop dropped by Bauer's office at the White House to discuss the subject. He had two aides in tow. They discussed the abortion study for a few minutes, then Koop sent the two aides from the room. Alone with Bauer, Koop confessed he couldn't find any evidence showing that abortion is more damaging to a woman's mental hygiene than actually having a baby. He compared the trauma of abortion to postpartum depression. Bauer was aghast. "You're not serious, are you?" he said. Koop wasn't really equating the "remorse and guilt" that a woman feels after aborting a child with the fleeting gloom a woman who gives birth might experience? In fact, Koop was. There wasn't proof that abortion was more injurious, he said. "The research just isn't clear on this issue."

Even in minor matters, social policy has come to naught in Reagan's second term. Reagan did support the recently enacted law adding catastrophic health insurance to Medicare, but congressional Democrats were more eager for that measure than the administration was. On other issues, the White House has let opportunities pass. The administration never introduced its own package on welfare reform and now is faced with a congressional bill it dislikes. On AIDS, White House staff members gladly handed the issue to a presidential commission they can't



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control. On drugs, Congress has taken the lead as old policy debates persist inside the administration. On day care, the administration is seriously examining alternatives, but too late.

Circumstances and Reagan are to blame. Most social programs must be passed by Congress. This isn't easy, and it got harder still when Democrats took over the Senate in 1986. Economic and foreign policy often can be carried out by the administration alone (propping up the dollar, the Moscow summit, etc.). So it's only natural the president and his minions stress economic and foreign policy. Besides, says a frustrated administration official, "No one in the White House cares about domestic policy. No one actually thinks government should actually run social policy." Bauer is an exception to the rule.

Reagan hasn't made things easier with his penchant for avoiding decisions. As Donald Regan, the former White House chief of staff, pointed out in his book, Reagan rarely makes a clear-cut decision or resolves a policy dispute among his advisers. The big battles on social policy, begun months or years ago, are still being fought. Reagan has yet to establish a firm policy on drugs. The disagreement between Education Secretary William Bennett and Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci on whether the military should be deployed against drug smugglers continues to be aired. The differences between Bauer and the Labor Department on day-care policy remain. The fight between Bauer and Koop on mandatory testing for AIDS came to a halt only because the issue was tossed to the commission.

Welfare reform has been on the administration's mind from the beginning. Martin Anderson, Reagan's first domestic policy chief, was an expert on the subject. But nothing happened. Early last year opportunity presented itself at the White House in the form of a bipartisan proposal put together by Michael Novak of the American Enterprise Institute. The authors got an audience with Reagan. That was the end of it. Reagan listened to the proposal, but didn't order any follow-up. The only voice heard at the White House was that of Charles Hobbs, the resident welfare expert. He didn't like the AEI proposal. "It died," says a White House official.

Welfare reform didn't die on Capitol Hill. Even without impetus from Reagan, the administration might have had a bill. But the fellow who'd have to concoct it, Secretary Otis Bowen of Health and Human Services, wasn't interested. He's a doctor and concentrates on health issues. At one point, the administration endorsed a Republican bill in the House. "It wasn't what we wanted, but it was the closest thing we could find," says a White House official. "It didn't last long." The White House had virtually no influence over the measure that cleared the Senate Finance Committee with support from Republicans such as Minority Leader Bob Dole. That left Reagan in an embarrassing position. On June 10 he threatened a veto, but he didn't have an alternative to tout.

By setting up a presidential commission, Reagan was spared a decision on AIDS policy and the need to talk about the issue. "The commission was given a free hand on recommendations," says a White House official. Howard Baker, the White House chief of staff who resigned June 14, "felt this was a nice way to wash our hands of this issue. It's a downer. It's hard to talk about springtime in America when you're talking about a deadly disease. It makes people uncomfortable." The recommendations of commission chairman James Watkins, issued June 2, weren't as bad as some Reagan aides feared. Watkins bashed the White House for lack of leadership, but also called for more testing and notification of sexual partners. "Nine months ago, these were controversial," said Bauer, who favors both.

To handle the day-care issue, the White House set up an "interagency working group" of officials from the White House and the Labor, Treasury, Health and Human Services, and Education departments. The group meets every Friday. "You learn a lot about the size of the work force, how many working mothers there are, that kind of thing," says one member. "It's not a fast-track endeavor." The day-care issue, though, is a hot one in the presidential campaign and in Congress. You couldn't tell it by Vice President George Bush, who hasn't sent a representative to the working group or prodded it for recommendations. The group plans to give the Cabinet and Reagan a set of proposals in August. "What could come of this is legislation in the next administration," says a member. "Why the next administration would be bound by what we do, I don't know. What we're doing is kind of pointless."

BAUER IS undeterred by his lack of success in promoting conservative social policy. He had several run-ins with Baker. Bauer once hosted Joe Clark, the baseball bat-wielding principal of a high school in Paterson, New Jersey, at the White House without getting Baker's prior approval. He was summoned to Baker's office for chastising after that episode drew press attention. White House aides also complain that Bauer chimes up too much at the Monday "issues" luncheon with Reagan. The president invariably winds up agreeing with Bauer on some touchy social issue that his less conservative aides wish Reagan would avoid. Peer disapproval has not held Bauer back.

Bauer is resourceful in keeping conservative ideas alive at the White House in the face of considerable indifference. He believes, for example, the administration should offer its own program for strengthening the black family. Since Reagan and senior White House aides are not interested, it isn't easy to get this issue off the ground. Bauer came up with the idea of his own commission, an advisory commission to the Office of Policy Development. He got Baker to go along. He filled the 32-member commission with black leaders, mostly from conservative, self-help, and Christian groups. The wife of Benjamin Hooks, the president of the NAACP, also joined. She is a friend of Baker.

The commission has an odd purpose. It was created not so much to bring the issue of the black family to the nation's attention as to bring it to Reagan's attention. Bauer's plan is for members to take up separate issues



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(inner-city schools, the welfare system, mobilizing the black family against drugs, etc.) and have their views expressed in a report in late summer. Then the report, put together by Bauer aide Dinesh D'Souza, will be passed on to Reagan. So far, so good. The trick is getting commission members together for a meeting with Reagan. They're willing, but time on the president's schedule is scarce. Chances are, Reagan would learn something. "I think it would be good for him to talk in a specific way about the problems facing the black family," says Bauer. "The commission is a good vehicle." It's also the only vehicle.

**FRED BARNES**

POSTCARD PUNJAB

# INSIDE THE TEMPLE

PUNJAB, THE STATE in northwest India where most of the country's Sikhs live, is in a bloody mess. Last spring Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's central government took control of Punjab, declaring that the Sikh-dominated state government had failed to hold the line against Sikh militants fighting for a separate homeland. Paramilitary forces were increased; restrictions on citizens' rights were tightened. The result: the killings rose. In 1987, 1,230 people were gunned down in Punjab. This year the number of killings already stands at nearly 1,400.

The situation is not one of utter panic. The fields are still being tended, except on farms where whole families have been killed or forced to flee by gunmen. During the day the roads are still choked with the traffic of various centuries: bullock carts, bicycle rickshaws, water buffalo, mini-vans, tractors, and the ever present green trucks of the police and paramilitary. Stores remain open—even liquor vendors, the perennial targets of the militants (fundamentalist Sikhs condemn alcohol consumption).

Historically, invaders from the north and west have had to cross Punjab to get to the rest of India, and Punjabis have developed a certain comfort with weapons and violence. In one ten-block stretch of Amritsar there are five shops specializing in "Guns and Ammo." Even before the terrorism began, the state had the highest murder rate in India.

But fear is there. It's not just the number of murders people fear, but the seeming randomness of the attacks. Gunmen commonly spray busy street-sides with bullets. Furthermore—this is what American press reports don't prepare you for—it's not just the terrorists people are afraid of; it's also the police and paramilitary. This is one reason the government is losing the war against the terrorists.

The government did win a major battle in May. For some time hundreds of well-armed militants had been living inside the Golden Temple complex of Amritsar, the Vatican of Sikhdom. This allowed them to force their views on the resident Sikh high priests who formulate the religious and political edicts of the faith. It was also a powerful symbol of defiance to the Gandhi government. On May 9 a militant inside the temple shot and seriously wounded a security officer. That sparked a siege during which government security personnel surrounded the complex, cut off all supplies, and engaged in gun battles. Several days later the last of the militants inside the temple surrendered.

What made the siege remarkable was the government's restraint. Though a number of militants were killed, there was little damage to the sacred shrine, and were no civilian casualties. In June 1984, when the Indian army faced a similar force of Sikh militants inside the temple, it blasted its way into the complex with tanks, demolishing a revered gold-domed building, the Akal Tacht, the supreme seat of Sikh religious authority. A library that contained sacred Sikh scriptures written by the gurus who founded the religion 400 years ago also went up in flames. Worst of all, hundreds of innocent Sikh worshipers were killed—some, according to a well-documented book by two BBC journalists, by summary execution.

The army's 1984 excesses fueled Sikh outrage and weakened the case of moderate Sikhs who advise cooperation with the government. The moderates' work is rendered especially admirable by the militants' practice of gunning down Sikhs who speak out against them. Even Sikh moderates, though, hype the "threat" that India's secular democracy poses to Sikh religious identity.

THE VAST MAJORITY of Sikhs don't support the terrorists or share their desire to secede from India. But nearly all Sikhs have grievances against the government in New Delhi. In 1984 Hindu rioters in New Delhi butchered thousands of innocent Sikhs in retaliation for the killing of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguard. The government's own commission of inquiry found that the riots were organized with help from members of Gandhi's ruling Congress (I) Party. Most of the organizers have yet to be tried. There are political grievances too, such as the government's program of constructing canals to divert local river waters (a major source of Punjab's famous agricultural abundance) to drier neighboring states.

In July 1985 Rajiv Gandhi signed an accord with the prominent Sikh moderate leader Sant Harchand Singh Lonowal. The accord took courage, and Lonowal paid for his: Sikh extremists assassinated him. The accord then bogged down. The terrorists' ranks and the killings, which had decreased in 1985, began climbing again.

The government insists that its fight is only with the militants, not the Sikhs—a people who, until a few years ago, were widely admired throughout India. But the cultural defamation and the disregard for innocent lives convince many Sikhs otherwise. At the very least, most Sikhs (and many non-Sikhs) believe that for political reasons the government is purposely mishandling the terrorist problem to keep the crisis going. India is 80 percent Hindu, yet Gandhi—a Hindu—has been losing popular support. A violent religious minority threatening public safety and national unity might lead Hindu voters to rally around him.



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Inderjit Kaur, a Sikh mother of four, was one of the worshipers trapped in the Golden Temple during the 1984 raid. Found barely alive, with two bullets in her body, she was taken to a nearby hospital. While recuperating, her name was entered in the official government records as one of the "innocent civilians injured during the army action," according to the newsmagazine *India Today*. Nevertheless, Kaur was later taken to a jail in the city of Jodhpur. There, she and 365 other Sikhs were kept, on vague charges, for almost four years. The "Jodhpur *détenus*," as they are known, became a cause célèbre with international groups such as Amnesty International as well as among Sikhs, both extremist and moderate. The government used the *détenus* as a bargaining chip in its negotiations with Sikh political and militant leaders, treating innocent civilians as political bait. Last March, as part of a larger peace initiative, the government released Inderjit Kaur and 39 other *détenus*. Over 300 remain in jail.

I heard numerous bitter accusations of torture at the hands of security personnel. A journalist in Amritsar who had just visited a nearby jail told us he saw inmates covered with welts. In 1986 a commission sponsored by the state government and headed by a respected former judge looked into reports of torture of Sikhs at an interrogation center in the Patiala district of Punjab. The commission concluded that the reports were true: tactics included the use of electric shocks, fecal matter, and wooden logs that cause great pain, but leave no marks, when rolled across the thighs.

Another practice that does not fill the average Sikh with affection for his government is the so-called "fake encounter": deliberate killings of suspected terrorists during staged incidents or after capture. The government denies that its forces engage in such tactics. But another 1986 government-sponsored commission found that almost all of the 35 "encounters" it investigated were "faked." Plenty of the victims are ruthless terrorists whom the government would have trouble prosecuting (the terrorists routinely intimidate witnesses from testifying against them). But such tactics naturally alienate Sikhs. Ashok Singh Bhai, who runs the Sikh Institute in Chandigarh, the Punjab capital, showed me a recent newspaper headline: "12 TERRORISTS KILLED IN PUNJAB, THREE POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED." "If the police can't identify whom they've killed," complains Bhai, "how do they know they are terrorists?"

THE SECURITY FORCES are trying to do a difficult job in rooting out Sikh militants, and they have the dead troops to prove it. But corruption within the forces, especially among the local police, undermines much of that hard-earned legitimacy. Dr. Shavinder Kaur Jauhal, a Sikh pediatrician from Ferozpur, complained: "The police take bribes. They arrest young men and demand 1,000 rupies for their release. If their families can't pay, the boys are killed." Police harassment, according to *India Today*, "has become a way of extorting money by force that has virtually no checks on it now." The Gandhi-appointed puppet governor of Punjab, S. S. Ray, receives hundreds of petitions each day about false arrests and disappearances of innocent people. (Describing his attempts to get close to the people of the state, Ray once said, "I have played tennis in every district in the Punjab.")

The press in India only occasionally takes on the central government's repression. American reporters in India almost never do. In April a pro-militant journalist was arrested for doing what a hundred other more objective journalists have done: interviewing terrorists inside the Golden Temple.

An impediment to the press is the lack of reliable, objective viewpoints. The politics of Punjab is a morass; people who criticize government actions, or defend them, usually do so to advance complicated religious or political agendas that have decades- or even centuries-old roots in Punjab history. I was introduced to a Sikh "civil rights" lawyer who said his clients were 300 innocent young Sikh men currently in jail. How did he know they were innocent? I asked. Because, he responded, no one could be found to testify against them. Pointing out that terrorists have been known to intimidate witnesses, I asked if his clients had killed anyone. "Oh yes," he said, "but only enemies of the Sikhs." When asked who these enemies are, the lawyer offered as an example "Nirankaris." Nirankaris are followers of a peaceful sect of Sikhism that orthodox Sikhs consider heretical. The militants have been gunning them down for several years.

TWO WEEKS before the recent siege, my wife and I went to the Golden Temple to talk with one of the militants' chief spokesmen, Nirvair Singh. He is a leader of the Khalistan Commando Force, one of several armed groups fighting the government. It was evening when we took off our shoes and entered the temple complex. The marble tiles underfoot were still warm from the sun. We could see the temple sitting on an island in the middle of a large pool, its golden image shimmering on the surface of the water. As we moved along the tiled walkway that surrounds the pool we could hear the amplified voices of chanters inside the temple singing ethereal hymns from Sikh scripture. Along the walkways we saw young men wearing blankets across their chests, with rifle barrels poking out of the top.

We were ushered into a room where Nirvair Singh—tall and handsome, in his 30s—stood among a dozen younger bearded-and-turbaned men. Behind them on the wall was a banner that read "*Khalistan Zindabad*"—long live Khalistan. Khalistan is the name of the Sikh nation the militants wish to create. "Like others, we are fighting a war of freedom," Singh declared, "because people of every community have a right to have a place where they can feel free." Asked how free Hindus and Muslims would be in a Sikh-controlled state, Singh insisted that people of all religions would be able to worship as they please. We then broached the subject of the killing of innocent people. The butchering of entire Sikh families is a gruesome trend that began last fall. Police, of course, blame the militants, who they say are slaughtering families suspected of cooperating with the security forces. Singh, however, claimed that "no



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true Sikh would kill women and children." Who, then, is doing the killing? "The government," Singh responded. "They have Sikhs killed by hired assassins and we are being blamed."

The "hired assassins" line may sound farfetched, but it is believed by large numbers of non-militant Sikhs, and it's taken seriously by many I talked to: from moderate Sikh intellectuals and journalists to a Western diplomat specializing in the politics of Punjab. They say the police, paramilitary, and Indian intelligence have organized ex-militants, smugglers, and other criminals willing to kill for money, into an army to hunt down the militants, their families, and other collaborators. In return, the gangs get the freedom to commit money-making crimes unimpeded by the government. After denying this for months, the government recently admitted it had financed and armed one such group. It has not admitted the group killed innocent families, only that the project "went out of hand" and had to be disbanded.

Proof of government complicity in these killings, if it exists, is certainly hard to come by. Steven Weisman, the *New York Times*'s New Delhi correspondent, told me he went to the village where one of these government "death squad" killings allegedly occurred. The villagers he interviewed gave such wildly different versions of the events—some insisting the killings didn't even take place in their village—that he gave up on the story.

The killing of families remains a mystery, but it is understandable why the Sikhs put the government on their list of suspects, right beside the militants. If a solution to the terrorist menace in Punjab still exists, it undoubtedly includes the kind of courageous political settlement Rajiv Gandhi tried to bring about in 1985. But such settlements require trust; and with his own security forces jailing, torturing, ransoming, and killing innocent people, the prime minister these days is running a bit short on trust.

**PAUL GLASTRIS**

Paul Glastris is a correspondent for *U.S. News and World Report*.

A skeptical review of his governorship.

# DUKAKIS IN OFFICE

IN 1975, shortly after beginning his first term as governor of Massachusetts, Michael Dukakis launched a crusade against smoking in the Statehouse. His puritanism so annoyed three (non-smoking) Democratic leaders that they pulled out huge cigars at a meeting in his office and started puffing away. Dukakis was not amused. Relations with the legislature didn't get much better from there. Most of Dukakis's major initiatives died, and he was voted out of office at the end of his term.

This vignette fits perfectly into the Dukakis story as it's now being played: he went into office as an idealist and rationalist, unwilling to bend to political realities. But after his unsuccessful re-election bid, he spent four years in meditation at Harvard and emerged a wiser man. When the voters returned him to office in 1982 he was still a rationalist but no longer a blind one. He was now a pragmatist, a coalition-builder—not just a thinker but a doer.

It makes for a great campaign commercial, but doesn't mesh very smoothly with the facts. In many respects what Dukakis has actually become is not a unique fusion of vision and practicality but a plain, old-fashioned politician. He's learned that one way to keep people happy is with bigger budgets and more patronage jobs, that open government isn't always effective government, and that there's no substitute for good p.r.

THE MASSACHUSETTS budget has mushroomed under Dukakis. He's overseen a 73 percent increase in state spending since he returned to office. By the administration's own account the governor used his line-item veto on only $88 million worth of the $12 billion budget. The state now faces a projected deficit of around $400 million.

Dukakis blames the shortfall on the revenue side of the ledger—state tax loopholes created by federal tax laws, a drop in capital gains revenues, and the legislature's reluctance to raise taxes. Whoever's to blame, the deficit is fast becoming an embarrassment, and he's taking no prisoners in his effort to get it under control. When state revenue projections began to flatten in late 1987 after years of unprecedented growth, Dukakis ordered the withholding of funds from a wide range of state programs. Homeless shelters closed and services for the disabled and elderly were curtailed. At the end of January, with more than half the fiscal year gone, half a billion dollars' worth of programs hadn't received more than ten percent of their yearly funding. "I don't see the budget as an unconditional promise," said state budget director Barbara Salisbury. In February the administration cut off the flow of paychecks to human services workers, and resumed them only after strong protests. The move was described by a Dukakis aide as a way to "get people's attention."

The retrenchment was too abrupt and sweeping to pull off secretly, but Dukakis tried. The administration didn't notify the legislature of the spending freeze, as state law requires, and legislators were besieged by angry constituents wondering what had happened. The legislators, among them leading Democratic liberals with close ties to Dukakis, leaked the story to the press and summoned Dukakis aides to explain. Now loyal Democratic legislators are trying to sort out the mess behind closed doors before George Bush gets much mileage out of it. The inevitable cuts in social services will "strengthen and expand my credibility," says Dukakis. "This is what a leader has to do."



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Meanwhile, the governor has had to suffer the indignity of seeing his fiscal management publicly assailed by his own party. According to a formal budget overview issued in May by Richard Voke, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Dukakis has been spending money far beyond the state's means. Debt service is up 55 percent since he returned to office. Most of the borrowed money is targeted for the state's most urgent needs—low-income housing, environmental cleanup, upgrading an archaic mental health system. But that fact doesn't help reconcile the Massachusetts debt with a key Dukakis campaign theme: "You can't build a strong economic future living on a credit card," he said as recently as early June.

WHEN MASSACHUSETTS was enjoying its several years of revenue windfalls and big budget surpluses, most of the money was being poured into a rapid expansion of the state work force. Some 4,000 employees have been added to the payroll since 1983. This figure doesn't include Dukakis's ever growing army of supposedly short-term special consultants, known as 03s for their payroll classification number. Dukakis likes 03s because they're exempt from civil service and union hiring guidelines, a fact that—in addition to granting much-needed managerial flexibility, as the administration stressed—allows the hiring of politically preferred employees.

In late 1986 state auditor John Finnegan, a Democrat, released a study that found more than half of $74 million in reviewed consultant contracts were for services "identical to those provided by state employees." Price competition wasn't a factor in awarding many contracts, and once hired many consultants were overpaid, undersupervised, and kept on the payroll indefinitely. The auditor termed the administration's 03 hirings "a deliberate dodge" to avoid publicly requesting money for new employees. A few weeks ago Dukakis aides announced a plan to save money by phasing out 4,000 regular, full-time jobs.

One of the lessons Dukakis seems to have learned during his years out of office is how to play hardball. During his first term as governor his insistence on openness in government was legendary. Not anymore. Last November Carmen Elio, chairman of the state's Retirement Law Commission for the past 12 years, made local headlines when he told a legislative committee the state payroll had shot up 65 percent since 1983, fueled by 12 percent growth in the state work force. This confirmation of Dukakis's payroll packing was especially inconvenient because some had already depicted it as a successful effort to build a political machine. Two weeks later Elio was fired. Massachusetts insurance commissioner Peter Hiam fared only slightly better. A year ago—over Hiam's strenuous objections—Dukakis allowed insurance companies to test applicants for AIDS. Hiam, after publicly noting that Dukakis had attacked President Reagan a month before for proposing mandatory testing, was allowed to resign.

Credibility, a central theme in the Dukakis campaign, may yet turn out to be a problem. Some of his administration's most highly touted accomplishments turn questionable under scrutiny, like the state's workfare program (Employment and Training Choices Program, or ET), which Dukakis terms "the way out of poverty for families on public assistance." Under ET the state hires contractors to train welfare recipients and find them jobs. As of last fall Dukakis was claiming 38,000 job placements through ET at an average wage of $6.50 an hour. But state officials admit they have no way of verifying the claim. The state doesn't keep figures on how many ET clients get jobs, so there's no way to know whether contractors are meeting their quotas of 60 percent to 70 percent job placement. There is also no record of the number of ET graduates who lose their jobs and re-enlist in the program; officials say the computer automatically wipes out information on previous placement.

State press kits emphasize that only 14 percent of ET clients return to the welfare rolls after a year. But a 1986 poll commissioned by the state showed 41 percent of ET graduates are back on the dole after three years. The House Republican leadership had to threaten state welfare officials with a legislative order recently before they would release basic statistics about ET and other welfare programs. (In late 1986, when local Republicans sought an accounting of all 03 employees from the state, they were told they could have it for a fee: $150,000 to cover photocopying and research costs.)

Indeed, trying to keep public policy information private is not uncommon under the new Dukakis. The state supervisor of public records recently ordered the administration to release documents showing how several state policies—including a ban on homosexual foster parents and a controversial prison-siting decision—were formulated. For over a decade the state has liberally interpreted the federal Freedom of Information Act and unsealed policy-making documents once the policy was made. But now the Dukakis administration insists that release of such documents would exert a "chilling effect" on candor between officials and violate "executive privilege." In a recent interview Attorney General James Shannon acknowledged that there was essentially no difference between the Dukakis position and the Reagan administration's refusal to release internal Iran-*contra* memos.

DUKAKIS'S CLAIM of leadership in fighting drug abuse is unlikely to fare well under scrutiny. As early as 1982 national studies found high school seniors from the Northeast had the nation's highest rate of illegal drug use, but it took Dukakis until December 1984 to offer an organized response, the Governor's Alliance Against Drugs. Suburban schoolchildren seem to like the celebrity anti-drug appeals favored by the Alliance, and corporate sponsors such as the Bank of Boston love the program's public relations value. But the Alliance has had little demonstrable effect on drug use, particularly among inner-city kids. Dukakis touts the program as a national model of governmental commitment to fighting drug use, but the program's basic approach is indistinguishable from Nancy



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Reagan's telling schoolchildren to just say no. And 99 percent of the Alliance's funding comes from federal grants. There are other good reasons to question the depth of the Dukakis administration's interest in drug-related issues. In February Dukakis called methadone maintenance programs "a much, much better way" to deal with the spread of AIDS among intravenous drug addicts than a needle-exchange program proposed by Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn. In early June administration officials, citing budget worries, reneged on a promise to provide $3.1 million for methadone clinics.

Dukakis's integrity was immortalized in testimony before a 1979 state commission probing government corruption, when an admitted bag man testified that bribery of state officials had become much more difficult after Dukakis took office. The image is real, to an extent. Veteran legislators recall with amazement the sight of Dukakis personally reviewing all campaign contributions and ordering anything questionable to be returned. Further, there is truth in the idea that Dukakis is an experienced administrator who can solve problems and use his regulatory power effectively; the state has checked rural development by denying shopping mall developers the permits they need to build driveways, and has spurred the construction of low-income housing by threatening local governments with the loss of state aid. But all told, the notion that Dukakis has been able to hang on to his good-government ideals while becoming an effective politician simply doesn't wash.

One of the first acts of his second term was abolition of an open lottery for part-time summer jobs, a reform he had instituted during his first term. Before the lottery, children of the politically connected had first call on lifeguard jobs at state-owned beaches. Dukakis the egalitarian stressed the "symbolic importance" of the lottery when he ordered it adopted. His later abandonment of it was no less symbolic.

**JON KELLER**

Jon Keller covers state politics for the Tab newspapers, a Massachusetts chain of 14 weeklies that includes Dukakis's hometown paper, the *Brookline Tab.*

Mexico's having a presidential election too.

# TAMING THE DINOSAUR

## BY DANIEL YERGIN

*Mexico City*

The white helicopter, named for the Mexican revolutionary leader Zapata, appeared abruptly over the sharp, bone-dry mountains in central Mexico. Within minutes it had landed in a cloud of dust. Its most important passenger was Carlos Salinas de Gotari, the candidate, in the July presidential election, of Mexico's ruling party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party—or the PRI. Salinas comes to Mexican politics from a new angle. He is not only the heir, as PRI candidate, to Mexico's revolutionary tradition. He also studied Mexican peasants for his Harvard Ph.D. in political economy. He invokes the history and emotions of the PRI, yet he is also very much a modernizer, intent on changing the politics and economy of Mexico.

A slight but steely figure in a traditional blue, open-neck shirt, Salinas was soon at a rally in the plaza of Taxco, a 16th-century silver-mining town. He listened under the hot sun as citizens vented their complaints at the microphones. Water resources were short; agricultural services needed to be improved. With Mexico's economic crisis in its sixth year, crime and safety were problems. Locally, the widening of the twisting highway up to the city had not yet been completed, nor had the guard-rails been put in place along the more precipitous turns. To all of these, Salinas replied methodically with his own program, down to the type of parking places appropriate to Taxco's narrow streets.

Twenty minutes later he was at a hacienda halfway down the hillside, discussing Mexico's foreign policy with some PRI experts. Then a courtyard meeting with local politicians, back to the helicopter, on to Acapulco for a midafternoon rally, and back to Mexico City that night.

Salinas is running very hard, traveling around Mexico, campaigning 15 to 16 hours a day, seven days a week. All of this might seem unnecessarily hard work for a man whose victory is a foregone conclusion. The PRI covers Mexican politics like a giant tarpaulin, stretching widely from left to right, and has won every presidential election since 1929. This year, to be sure, the election is a little different. It is the most contested presidential election in many years.

The question for Salinas is not whether he wins—for he certainly will—but how he wins and whether he'll have a sufficient mandate to attack Mexico's economic problems and to preside over political evolution. If his share of the vote is too low, his credibility as president may be impaired, and he might not be able to muster the political power necessary to cope with the economic crisis. If his

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share is too large, then the PRI will be charged with political "irregularities," and his ability to unite the nation in reasonable political change could be jeopardized. Among the three finalists for the PRI nomination, Salinas had been regarded as the least likely—the most cerebral, the least political, the least charismatic. Also, he was the youngest—only 39 when he was chosen (though that still makes him older than 80 percent of the people in this youthful country). His relentless campaigning since his nomination has built up his popular appeal.

Salinas's opponents are campaigning not against him but against the PRI. Although the opposition parties hold about 25 percent of the seats in the Congress, that is about all they have of any great significance. The PRI is really a broad coalition of labor, business, and peasant groups; and it has been within the PRI that the nation's politics have been shaped. In this election the strongest threat had appeared to come from the right, from the PAN, a conservative party based in the north, with strong links to the Roman Catholic Church. Its candidate, Manuel Clouthier, is an outspoken millionaire tomato exporter.

BUT NOW A perhaps stronger challenge has formed on the left. Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas, a former PRI governor, led an internal opposition within the PRI called "Democratic Current." After being denied the head of the party's think tank, he left the party, along with Porfiro Muñoz Ledo, a former head of the party and one of the finalists for the 1976 PRI presidential nomination. Cárdenas is now the candidate of a coalition of the left-wing parties.

Cárdenas carries a unique—and, for the PRI, somewhat embarrassing—legacy. His father, Gen. Lázaro Cárdenas, the PRI president of Mexico during much of the 1930s, created the modern Mexican political order and laid the basis for the economic system, with its massive state role and corporatist structure. Almost exactly 50 years ago the elder Cárdenas threw out the American and British oil companies and nationalized the oil industry. That drama (the most important event in modern Mexican history after the revolution itself) inextricably tied oil to nationalism—along with a certain degree of anti-Americanism. It was also Cárdenas who redistributed land to the peasants.

It is fitting that the ghost of General Cárdenas should arise this year. Fifty years after the general nationalized the oil industry, Salinas is leading a campaign to change the Cárdenas system—to open up the political process and to shrink the economic power of the state. It is this that the younger Cárdenas is opposing. He is calling for the restoration of high public spending, though he seems to have no coherent plan for how this debt-ridden country will be able to afford it. He calls for economic nationalism, protectionism, debt repudiation, and a critical stance toward the United States.

Despite their wide ideological differences, Clouthier and Cárdenas unite on one point. Their most important tactic and objective is to challenge the legitimacy of the election itself. The PAN charges that state elections in northern Mexico were stolen from it in 1986, and Clouthier is threatening "civil disobedience" in the aftermath of this election.

Ironically, this challenge comes at a time when the new generation in the PRI is trying to trim its monopoly and make room for the opposition. A few weeks ago, in the old colonial town of Puebla, Salinas shocked traditional PRI activists by attacking "obsolete practices and electoral trickery." He declared, "We will defend our victories, but we will equally accept our defeats." He sought to legitimize the notion of a functioning multiparty system. "Opposition has a role to play in a democratic system," he said, and "aids in the tasks of government."

Salinas says he wants a big victory, but he wants even more a victory the legitimacy of which will not be questioned. "I don't want to break records of numbers, percentages, but records of credibility in the election," he said to me, as we traveled on a campaign bus across Mexico City.

MEXICO HAS CHANGED in many ways over the last few decades. The population has become much more urbanized and better educated, and political participation has increased. Tensions that need political outlet have been created by the country's economic and social problems. These are the changes that have persuaded Salinas and his generation that if stability and social peace are to be maintained, the political system must evolve so that politics occurs not merely within the PRI, but also among the PRI and other parties. There is another aspect as well. Salinas is pushing for a more open economy, which is essential, he believes, if the economic crisis is to be overcome. Such an economy, he and those around him fear, cannot coexist with a monolithic political structure.

The PRI's monopoly began to erode two decades ago, when minority parties were first admitted to the Congress. Proportional representation has been applied to state legislatures and is being expanded in the Congress. Salinas makes clear that he intends to push further. Various models are suggested—from India's Congress Party to Japan's Liberal Democratic Party. "We're talking about the possibilities of reform," said one of Salinas's advisers, "about changing a system into a majority-party system with an important minority." No one expects the PRI to cease being the dominant party. "Our type of majority is so large," the adviser added, "that we have a structural majority."

The success or failure of this unusual political initiative will be affected both by willingness of the opposition parties to play within the evolving system rather than challenging it, and by the degree that the traditional forces in the PRI, long accustomed to domination, will give ground. The outcome will be much affected by the popular political skills that Salinas demonstrates. Cárdenas's defection indicates at least a fraying of the PRI coalition, and one of Salinas's toughest battles may be with some of the entrenched union leaders, who are very powerful within the PRI coalition and who do not want to give up any of their prerogatives. Some of them are already expressing



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open hostility toward Salinas.

But Salinas's ability to carry out political reform will also depend upon how well he does in meeting the most important task facing his administration: coping with the economic crisis and restoring growth. Mexico's strong growth through the 1960s was based upon a highly protected economy, with a great deal of inefficiency in both the public and private sectors. In the mid-1970s President José López Portillo placed his economic bets on the rapid development of vast, newly discovered oil reserves. Within very few years Mexico had become a major world oil exporter. But the emphasis on oil led to an overvaluation of the peso, and to an import surge that crippled Mexico's once vigorous export capability and severely distorted the trade balance. This was accompanied by an orgy of international borrowing, which made Mexico one of the world's leading debtors, with a $100 billion-plus debt the country simply could not repay.

López Portillo got out just in time, at the end of 1982, and he left his successor, Miguel de la Madrid, with a disaster. De la Madrid embarked on a program of retrenchment: slashing government spending and subsidies, pushing the country away from oil to other exports, continually sparring with international bankers, and trying to reduce the featherbedding of Mexican industry and labor. Then came the devastating Mexico City earthquake in 1985, and the collapse in oil prices in 1986, which cut the government's total revenues by almost 25 percent. Yet the de la Madrid administration has continued readjustment, despite a heavy cost in austerity and declining income per capita. The peso sank further; non-oil exports expanded; state enterprises were sold off. A few weeks ago the state-owned Aeromexico airlines, battered by a strike, was allowed to go bankrupt.

AT THE CENTER of these efforts to fix the economy has been Carlos Salinas. As minister of budget, he was both author and implementer of the austerity policies. Salinas is described by his critics as a technocrat—and worse, as "a Harvard-trained economist." Not only did he get his Ph.D. in political economy from Harvard, but he and his father constitute the first father-son team of graduates from Harvard's Kennedy School. The suggestion is that, as a technocrat, he is not up to the political demands of the public office.

In fact, Salinas is, on one level, a technocrat, and he is not at all abashed about it. "Today, politicians have to have good training," he said. "It is a prerequisite to cope with the complex demands they face. It is part of the training, but not the only part." Still, as minister of budget, he probably had the most political job in Mexico. He had to cut and recut government spending, allocating and reallocating increasingly scarce resources. Here, in almost constant crisis negotiations, he demonstrated not only his grasp of Mexico's problems but also a considerable ability to marshal arguments, to persuade powerful opponents. "When he was a student his main preoccupation was social injustice," said a friend of 20 years. "When he entered government, he faced all the difficulties of dealing with government and rivals. As a result, he has become stronger and cooler in his analysis."

But Salinas is also very much a politician with deep roots in the traditional political culture of Mexico. His father was a senior Cabinet minister in the early 1960s, and was a finalist for the PRI's 1964 presidential nomination. A stream of senior politicians passed through the household when Salinas was growing up. "In my family," he said, "politics was the constant talk of the table." As a result, at a young age Salinas was already very well known to the older generation of politicians.

What accomplishment, I asked Salinas, was he proudest of as minister? "Introducing order into public-sector spending," he replied. "The budget is truly like a dinosaur in the middle of an icebox. If you let it grow, it can melt down the icebox and, once out, it is very difficult to tame. It is the same in Mexico as in any country. I contributed to the taming of the budget dinosaur."

Salinas intends to continue pushing the Mexican economy into the world marketplace. His plan includes further shrinking of the state sector, the selling-off of state companies, more emphasis on non-oil exports, more discipline on the part of unions, more cooperation with private business (so long as business is investing and trying to export), and more foreign investment. He is equivocal about any further expansion of the oil sector. As he sees it, the real challenge to Mexican sovereignty no longer comes from an overweening U.S. investment, but from the threat of being left behind in a changing world economy, represented by Japan. Japanese investment in Mexico is increasing; visiting Japanese businessmen in Mexico City stay in the new Nikko Hotel. Some of Salinas's economic advisers look to a Japanese, not a U.S., model. Salinas, who did his graduate work in America, sends his own children to the Japanese school in Mexico City.

WILL SALINAS be able to deliver? Late last year inflation was running at an annual rate of 170 percent. A new economic program early this year has temporarily brought it down considerably, though at the cost of further austerity. There is a limit to how much hardship Mexicans might tolerate. Unemployment is not helped by a million young people entering the labor force each year. Although Salinas pledges to restore economic growth, he intends to make sure, as he told me, that it is "growth that is different than in the past in that it will not depend on public sector spending. I definitely want to avoid deficits in the public sector."

One way to square some of these economic circles is to take a tougher line on debt with the U.S. and other banks. The scale of repayments, he says—$50 billion in interest payments over the past five years—has crippled economic growth, and this threatens social stability. Some of Mexico's debt is currently being sold at a discount to the face value, and Salinas's aim seems to be to transform the bulk of the debt into new financial instruments that can be traded on open markets at a discount.



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Debt is one issue that could put him at odds with the United States. Another is Central America, on which Mexico's policy has been to avoid outside intervention. Another major issue is drugs. Under legislation passed by the U.S. Congress in 1986, the president must certify whether other countries are fully cooperating in the war against drugs. In March this year the U.S. Senate voted to overturn the Reagan administration's certification of Mexico. The House, however, did not go along.

The Senate action created considerable anger in Mexico. "We are not students in a grammar school to be given grades," one Mexican official complained. "And why should we be judged by standards that are different from those by which the United States itself is judged?" The Mexicans are ready with their counterarguments—that their country is spending 25 percent of its defense budget in the anti-drug battle, that it is consumption in the United States and not Mexico that continues to rise, that more marijuana is grown in California than in Mexico, and that more than 400 Mexican policemen and soldiers have been killed in battles with drug transporters in the last few years. "I am worried about the drug traffickers because they have so much money and arms that they constitute a threat to our national security and development," says Salinas.

There is one other issue in U.S.-Mexican relations that will be directly affected by how well Salinas does with the economy, and that is immigration. "If we are able to recover growth in the next years, migration will diminish to the U.S.," he says. "But it will not stop because the American economy will continue demanding those workers." One requirement for growth in Mexico, he insisted, is an open U.S. market. Mexico will send either goods or people to the United States.

That Sunday was another of those endless campaign days. After breakfast with the organization of restaurant owners, Salinas headed to a meeting on the cultural life of the old section of Mexico City. Then on a walking tour through the old section of Mexico City. It was mid-afternoon by the time he reached the central square of Mexico City, bounded by the main cathedral and the presidential palace. The latter is very well known to Salinas; as minister of budget he used to occupy the front corner office. Enthusiastic lottery ticket sellers, clad in green vests, suddenly formed an impromptu honor guard for Salinas into the main entrance to the palace. But soldiers quickly rushed to block the way. Not until December, when the next president—undoubtedly Salinas—will be inaugurated. That means five more months to wait on the precarious Mexican economy, with all the attendant international risks—from interest rates, oil prices, and protectionism—that can make the job ahead even harder, and the dinosaur even more difficult to tame. Salinas and his party made their way back to the bus on the far side of the square, and on to the next stop.

Training America's next generation of political hacks.

# THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

## BY JEFFREY L. PASLEY

THE NATION'S political professionals—all the consultants, campaign managers, lobbyists, pollsters, and media wizards who have overrun Washington and established a serious beachhead in most big cities and state capitals—have a problem. On the surface, things seem to be going pretty well. The pros have built the political system into a multibillion-dollar industry, employing thousands of people. They've made themselves seemingly indispensable to every kind of high-officeholder, would-be officeholder, and moneyed interest with an ax to grind. They have seriously weakened the legal profession's traditional lock on political influence. To the lawyer's role as automatic political insider, they have added the entrepreneurial independence and personal flamboyance of the modern-day business hero, resulting in a mythic formulation all their own.

Jeffrey L. Pasley, a former TNR reporter-researcher, is a writer living in Washington.

But though they are as rich as the businessmen and as powerful as the lawyers, there is one thing the political pros still don't have: respect. They still lack a "profession," with the exclusivity and prestige that would entail. Now they have taken their first step toward psychic equality with the doctors and lawyers. They have the Graduate School of Political Management.

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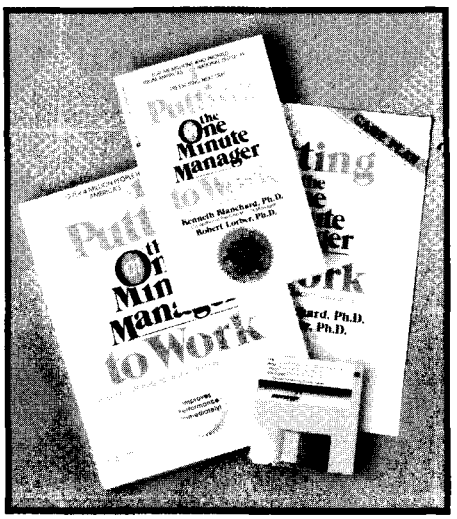


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financial overkill that characterized politics in the Reagan era had created an opportunity for someone like him. "Politics in the last 20-25 years has really changed so dramatically. . . . The technical skills that are brought to bear on the political process are so vastly beyond the knowledge of people who have grown up in politics," he explained. So he set himself to the task of "training technicians, well-trained people who will make an impact."

FABRICANT UNDERSTOOD that most prospective students would be attracted to his school for the same reason they are attracted to, say, the Harvard Business School, to which he explicitly compares GSPM. In the process of establishing the school, he made sure that he "developed a strong network of people in Washington and Albany that we think will take a look at [hiring] our students." He had the proposal studied by a blue-ribbon panel of experts in the field, including Reagan-Bush media consultant Roger Ailes and Democratic consultant Ralph Martine.

Then he seems to have taken care to sign up for the faculty potential employers of students, or at least to create that impression among incoming students. The teaching faculty includes heavyweight Republican consultant Douglas Bailey (former mastermind for Gerald Ford) and a couple of big-state Republican governors. (George Bush campaign manager Lee Atwater and political scientist and commentator Larry Sabato are both billed as faculty members even though neither has ever taught at the school. Not surprisingly, only a few GSPM students have found jobs with the "strong network" of employers, and several students feel that the administration misled them about their job prospects as GSPM graduates.) The other teachers are mostly entrepreneurs who are lesser known but successful from various branches of the politics industry: the president of a political market-research firm, the president of a political computer firm, a veteran Republican lobbyist, etc. There are even a couple of real academics on hand to round out the roster.

Though the faculty seems to list toward the starboard side of the political spectrum, Fabricant and everyone associated with the school stress its non-partisanship. A press release boasts that "neither the make-up of the faculty nor the curriculum reflects any ideological preference." This neutrality is vital, since "the School's education goal is to teach concepts of political management that are equally valid for students of any party orientation."

GSPM is not pursuing anything so boring as an ideological program. Unlike some similar enterprises spawned by the high-tech New Right, it is not attempting to train commandos in the war for truth. The school's promotional material makes its real agenda clear. In the school's admissions brochure, Fabricant writes: "It is our intention, made explicit through admissions procedures, the appointment of faculty, and the academic program itself, to contribute to the development of a true professional politics." Elsewhere the school makes even broader claims for itself. According to one of its press releases, the school could transform "the way that politics is practiced in this country, if [it] is successful in achieving its main purpose of stimulating professional identity and discipline in what is de facto a profession."

Just what would constitute a "true professional politics"? The answer seems to be, a politics practiced more like the law is practiced, conducted on behalf of others by zealous but essentially disinterested mercenaries. Talking about his school, Fabricant sounds like John Houseman in *The Paper Chase* ("You come in here with a mind full of mush, and you leave thinking like a lawyer"). "The students don't know this yet," he says, "but [the GSPM program] will teach them about politics the way law school teaches lawyers about the law. Law school is like a religion. What we want to do is teach a way of thinking, to think strategically. What will be driving [the students' thinking] is almost a matrix, of costs and benefits associated with each political approach."

What would be a practical example of such "strategic thinking"? Given a particular client with a particular political objective, Fabricant explains, the student could "cost out" each of the client's options ("hire a lobbyist, form a PAC, bring a lawsuit, run a campaign, etc.") and then pursue the most effective one.

For someone as steeped in the lore of interest-group politics as Fabricant, belief in causes just gets in the way, and the rise of the professional, ideologically indifferent political manager is only logical. "It's not a bad development," he says, "to have a dispassionate relationship between manager and client, if you see democratic politics as a matter of groups of people who have a right to be at the table, who are entitled to representation."

THE GSPM CURRICULUM may be useful to both brands of politicians, Republican and Democratic, but it is geared to only one style of politics: the big-money, big-media style. Of course, this style is not equally available to all the interests with "a right to be at the table." Nor is it clear whether even the universal availability of GSPM's style of politics would enhance American democracy or the opposite.

The flavor of democracy, GSPM-style, is obvious from a glance at some of the school's course offerings. You can take "Campaign Finance," covering budgeting, accounting, and the "major tactics used in raising money for campaigns," including weighty topics like "contacts with Political Action Committees," "the organization of finance committees," and "entertainment events." In other words, this is a class in wheedling money from PACs, greasing up rich people, and throwing boffo parties. Or there is Professor Bailey's course, "Campaign Advertising and Promotion," where students make sample ads for a sample campaign and also learn the "strategies and techniques" for getting on the TV news.

Then there are several computer and statistics courses, and one called "Qualitative Research." This turns out to involve learning to analyze those group interviews with "average" citizens that form the basis of many political ads



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and long, boring election-year news stories. With a syllabus heavy with anthropo-, socio-, and psychological tracts, the main goal of the course is to teach students how to use "focus groups" as political lab rats, to try out new campaign messages, slogans, and ads. This way they can get some hard data on the ergs of "vision" or rems of "leadership" the voters want from their next president or sewer commissioner.

Best of all, however, are Lobbying I and Lobbying II, taught by business lobbyist Harold Griffin. For class one day last winter, the syllabus listed the topic as "How to Influence the Legislative Process," with subheads like "Methods of Gaining Access to Congress," "Entertainment," and—that old standby of democratic theory—"Honorariums for Speaking Engagements."

ALL THOSE CONNECTED with the school emphasize that one of the most important achievements of the professionalization process will be the development of a "canon of ethics" for political managers. The press releases emphasize this aspect; one piece of literature even goes so far as to dub the school's library the Political Management and Ethics library.

But Fabricant admits that he's been busy and the school has had to "put ethics aside" for a while. "Ethics is one of the things that isn't thought through yet," he said, in a bewildered tone. "What we have concentrated on is the skills and the technology. You have to make sure you can deliver the product." On the other hand, he went on, GSPM has hired an "ethicist," as well as a graduate researcher who would be assigned to "do nothing but develop the ethical dimension."

The students seem even less worried than Fabricant about the missing "dimension." In Professor Griffin's Lobbying I class, a discussion of a book about the 1986 tax reform bill suddenly turned to Griffin's own career in the influence business. A woman in the class asked whether lobbying for causes he didn't believe in harmed his "effectiveness." Griffin replied that it didn't because in many cases the people he lobbied didn't even know what his personal philosophy was. The class nodded sagely.

The student pressed Griffin for any ethical problems he might have had. Stumped for a moment, he retreated to his profession's "canon of ethics." Referring to "a friend" who had once worked for the Tobacco Institute, he replied that "every industry is entitled to their own fair shake. A criminal defendant, even if he's guilty, deserves representation."

Most of the class seemed to think this was just good sense, but a student named Adam made the point that the courtroom example didn't apply at all. "A person doesn't have a constitutional right to a lobbyist. How can you separate lobbying from what it is you are lobbying for? If you believe tobacco is killing millions of people, then how can you lobby for it?" Adam's argument seemed to baffle his classmates. Someone in a Hard Rock Cafe T-shirt protested that "free speech is a constitutional right."

Adam pushed ahead. "Why is it that a person has a right to a government-appointed lawyer and not to a government-appointed lobbyist? Why is that, is lobbying different or do lobbyists just not have as good a lobby?" he asked. I laughed, but the class didn't seem to get the joke.

Such disrespect for their chosen profession was too much for the other students. For the better part of a half-hour, the class took turns disagreeing with Adam. Several rephrased Griffin's rationalization. One expressed the view that "if you want to make money, you don't have to worry about what you believe."

With class opinion running heavily in his favor, Griffin summed up what most of his students seemed to be feeling: "The difference between many of us and Adam is that we have a lot of faith in the system. . . . If you give this guy your best shot, a jury will convict him if the facts are still against him. Your only ethical duty is to represent him as well as you can."

WHICH SEEMS to prove why the last thing this country needs is a "true professional politics." The problem with the Graduate School of Political Management is not that it might be ideologically biased or even that it lacks a code of ethics. The problem is with the very concept of a political profession skilled at using the system to achieve the goals of whoever can pay it, and convinced that its very nobility lies in its indifference to the merits of the particular cause it has been hired to advance. This is a problem that cannot be addressed by adding "ethics" like sugar.

Every defendant is entitled to a lawyer in a criminal trial because the state has chosen to direct its prosecutorial power at a particular individual. Through faulty analogy, lawyers use this principle to justify the high-minded moral agnosticism with which they represent clients in all other areas of their work. But at least the paradigm of the law is that lawyers on opposing sides will argue their case before a neutral judge or jury. There is no such paradigm of democracy to justify the work of lobbyists and political consultants. The paradigm of democracy is that citizens are represented by their elected officials, not by lobbyists, and certainly is not that every political campaign and cause has the full panoply of advanced manipulative skills available to it.

On the other hand, why should we draw the line at politicos? Mere occupations have always become "professions" in order to protect the privileges and boost the incomes of the professionals, for the good of the members, not the customers. When a "canon of ethics" develops, it is usually a series of rationalizations that serve to excuse or explain away the particular moral shortcuts involved in pursuing a profession for profit. If the ethical code does proscribe certain activities, it will only be those that would severely damage the profession's reputation and thus the earning power of all its members. The ethical proscription merely serves to insulate the professional from the crimes of his colleagues. "Professionalism" is the means by which professionals achieve maximum income with minimum accountability.

This may be OK for law, medicine, dentistry, accounting, and so on. But politics is too important to be left in the hands of professionals. □



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# STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

## Twenty Years Later

The June 1 issue of *Variety* has a 32-page section devoted to the 50th anniversary of FIAF, the international association of film archives. Included are reports from and listings of archives in some surprising places. (For instance, Thailand, Luxembourg, Algeria, Bolivia, South Korea, Indonesia, Turkey.) Without question the largest archive, overwhelming in size, is Gosfilmofond in the Soviet Union. Lenny Borger reports that it covers 370 acres, 40 miles outside Moscow, that it employs over 700 people, that it has its own residential buildings, school, nursery, club, cinema, gardens, and hotel for visitors.

*Commissar*
(International Film Exchange)

*Big*
(20th Century-Fox)

Astonishing. But all cannot be joyous about Gosfilmofond because, presumably, in addition to the usual archival and preservation work, this is the place where banned films are stored. Presumably it's on Gosfilmofond shelves that *Commissar* was resting for 20 years. Alexander Askoldov made it in 1967, with his own screenplay adapted from a Vasily Grossman story; it was Askoldov's first and, so far, his last feature. For reasons not entirely clear but that include Gorbachev's approval, *Commissar* has lately been released outside the Soviet Union.

I had read of the film's indictment for "chauvinism," that word being code for "excessive" Jewishness. I expected to see a film that could be construed as propagandistic—perhaps for Zionism. But unless the mere sympathetic portrayal of Jewish characters is considered tendentious, particularly if they have some knowledge of persecution, I still don't know why it was suppressed—especially since it was allowed to be made. In other words, this is one more instance of a familiar contradiction in Communist countries: a film is approved for production, then buried when it is finished. The most recent previous example was another Soviet film, Tengiz Abuladze's *Repentance*, suppressed for almost three years.

For me, to put it in a relatively petty but inescapably personal way, both these Soviet films presented difficulties. How wonderful it would be to be able to greet them warmly. But I thought *Repentance* bloated and heavy-handed, notable only for the candor of its Stalin and Stalinist caricatures. *Commissar* is filmmaking of a higher order, at least in ambition, but it has its own troubles.

It takes place in the Ukraine in 1922, during the civil war. A woman political commissar attached to a Red regiment, Nonna Mordukova, is discovered to be pregnant. Her lover, a Red soldier, has been killed. She is a fervent revolutionary but is forced to leave the army until she has borne her child. She is billeted in the home of a poor Jewish tinker along with his wife and six small children.

The tinker, Roland Bykov, and his wife, Raisa Nedaskovskaya, complain about the intrusion and expense, especially he. But soon the Jewish couple make the commissar feel at home and become friends with her. When the commissar's baby comes, the Jewish wife helps her through a difficult delivery. Some months later, the Reds are driven out of this town by Whites. The Jewish family fears harassment or death. The commissar, who has been wearing dresses that the Jewish woman made for her, puts her uniform back on, leaves her baby with the Jews, and rejoins her regiment.

This might have been a fair getting-to-know-you film, in which forced proximity causes cultural strangers to understand one another, then grow to like one another. That is how, allowing for some initial cinematic flourishes, it seems to begin, helped by Mordukova's performance as a human, flag-bearing tank. But Askoldov was determined to turn this small formulaic story into a magnum opus.

He encourages Bykov (who, like this director, is not Jewish) to give a performance that makes my most painful memories of the Yiddish Art Theater seem like British underplaying. What shrugs, what gestures (always two-handed), what cantorial intonations, what head-clutching. It's all well-meant, not caricature, but Bykov, an experienced actor, here uses his experience and memories like a file of recipes, adding ingredients of his own to strengthen the flavors.

In his own way Askoldov has followed much the same procedure. He can't forget the great films he has seen. How assiduously he pays homage to his idols—soldiers struggling to push a cannon up a sandy hillock, like Eisenstein, nature being evoked like Dovzhenko. All this is in the present tense, in black and white. Then, with the help of his gifted cinematographer, Valeri Ginzberg, he begins to insert into his basically simple story a lot of sepia-colored flashbacks and fantasies—even a flash-forward, a pre-vision of a concentration camp. These inserts are of elephantine artiness. For instance, if we see the surface of a lake in one shot, the next shot has to be the lake upside down. If we see some horses galloping, then we then have to

### FILMS WORTH SEEING

*A Handful of Dust.* A subtly ingenious adaptation of Waugh's great novel. Superbly directed, edited, scored, and acted—with Alec Guinness majestic as the man who loved Dickens. (Reviewed 6/28/88)

*Rikky and Pete.* Australian comedy. A sister and brother, in their 20s, head north from Melbourne and find amusing adventures. Credibility is not meant to be a strong point. (6/20/88)

*A Taxing Woman.* Whiplash direction and smart acting. Keen satire about a woman tax inspector in Tokyo. (5/2/88)

*Wings of Desire.* Peter Handke's screenplay, about an angel seeking mortality in Berlin, is more imaginative than Wim Wenders's direction. Still, a lyrical work. (5/23/88)

**SK**



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see them standing in the lake, drinking, in neatly arranged rows like Rockettes.

The use of the horses underscores a remarkable coincidence. *Commissar* was made in the same year, 1967, that the Hungarian director Miklos Jancsó was making his great film about the civil war, *The Red and the White*, and was making it in the Soviet Union. I have no idea whether each director knew the other or the other's work, but in addition to the choice of period, stylistic similarities recur here. Askoldov begins with long traveling shots of military action that lead to other military action, one arc of movement generating another, much like Jancsó; and the shots of saddled but riderless horses galloping at full tilt could almost be out of *The Red and the White*.

I imply nothing. I merely note the coincidence. It's sad enough to be unenthusiastic about the work of a man who has undergone what Askoldov has had to endure. At any rate, it's certainly just to say that if he hadn't been muffled for 20 years, he might have gone on from this tyro imitativeness to develop a style and being of his own. *Commissar* is little more than a studentlike beginning, but not an ordinary beginning.

Another formula gets another workout in an American picture. Sometimes I think of film formulas as racehorses that have to be taken out and exercised once in a while lest they get stiff and lame. This one is about the boy in the man's body. It gets a pretty good go-round this time.

Recently there's been a rash of comparable films, which I've managed to miss. I went to *Big* because of Tom Hanks, and because of Hanks I had a pretty good time. The script by Gary Ross and Anne Spielberg works one small variation: the boy doesn't switch places with anyone else—his father, for instance. The 13-year-old boy becomes himself at about 35 while remaining 13 years old inside and without going forward 22 years in time. He's inside his later self on exactly the same day.

Two requirements, then. First, some interesting complications for the boy-man, which the script supplies well enough. Second, a performance that convinces us of the boy inside the man without becoming cute. Hanks does this better than well enough. Penny Marshall directed it with some communicated enjoyment. If you watch *Big* with a bag of popcorn, the screen may seem to be refilling the bag, but in any case it's pleasant. □


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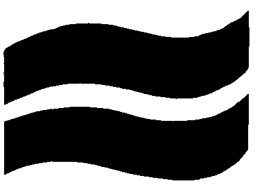

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# SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION

## For the Record: From Wall Street to Washington
## by Donald T. Regan

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 397 pp., $21.95)

## Revolution
## by Martin Anderson

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 486 pp., $19.95)

There is a paradox at the heart of the Reagan administration.

In his new book, Martin Anderson, Ronald Reagan's first domestic policy adviser, portrays a White House that is the very model of efficient and thoughtful policy-making. "All major policy ideas had to pass through a gauntlet of committee meetings, ranging from formal meetings of the full Cabinet or the Cabinet councils, to smaller, more informal gatherings," he writes. Each of the six Cabinet councils had jurisdiction over an area of policy that cut across departments—like trade, natural resources, and defense. In addition to the relevant Cabinet members, each had its own staff and executive secretary. Below these were a number of working groups, developing specific policy options in each area and tracking the implementation of decisions already made. The councils and working groups, in turn, were supported by "the best research facilities in the world," comprising a "level of available expertise, facts, and studies . . . [exceeding] that of even the most sophisticated research institutions," including an endless stream of classified information pouring in from the four corners of the globe.

To say nothing of the talent. Anderson spares no superlative in describing most of his White House colleagues. David Stockman, then director of the Office of Management and Budget, had attracted "probably the most talented team to ever head the budget office . . . unrivaled in OMB's history." The White House speechwriters were "the most talented group assembled since the days of Kennedy and Nixon." He even quotes Robert Strauss, who in a (characteristic) fit of non-partisan enthusiasm called the White House staff "simply spectacular . . . the best I've ever seen."

For Anderson, moreover, this extraordinary system was a logical extension of Reagan's 1980 presidential campaign, in which "the largest and most distinguished group of intellectuals ever assembled for an American political campaign" had been organized into 48 policy task forces, each producing detailed reports on what the Reagan administration should do once in office. George Shultz alone presided over six economic policy task forces, whose membership totaled 74 "highly talented" individuals. The subsequent transition to the White House was "the most carefully planned and effective in American political history." The personnel operation, through which 2,000 gifted young men and women were chosen to fill the highest levels of the administration, "was easily the best in the history of the United States."

Let us assume even a small element of truth to Anderson's hyperbole. Compared with other recent administrations, the one that came to office in January 1981 did appear to be unusually competent and well organized. It knew what it wanted to do, and it had thought about how to do it.

But, the paradox. How could such a beautifully designed policy process have generated the remarkable stream of blunders that has marred the Reagan administration during the past seven years? Why the unprecedented budget deficits, culminating in the $500 billion we now owe the rest of the world? Why the foreign policy debacles—the disaster of the Marines in Lebanon, the Bitburg folly, the foolishness of the "disinformation" campaign, the Iran-*contra* fiasco, the humiliation by Noriega? Why the seemingly endless series of scandals, improprieties, forced resignations? Even the administration's claimed successes, like the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, seem to depend less on any carefully conceived strategy than on events and personalities over which the White House has no control, and on luck.

Donald Regan, the president's secretary of the treasury during the first term and chief of staff for two years during the second, offers one explanation for this arresting divergence between input and output. In his titillating memoir, he blames Reagan's fantastic passivity. The book has made headlines for its revelation that a clairvoyant in California determined Reagan's schedule, but Regan's criticism of the president is more fundamental than anything merely celestial. Regan wishes to demonstrate that Reagan simply wasn't interested in the substance of policy.

The campaign task forces, the working groups, the talented advisers notwithstanding, when Regan took the Treasury job he had no clue what he was supposed to do. After several months he confessed in his diary: "To this day I have never had so much as one minute alone with Ronald Reagan! Never has he, or anyone else, sat down in private to explain to me what is expected of me, what goals he would like to see me accomplish, what results he wants. . . . How can one do a job if the job is not defined?" Lacking any guidance from above, Regan felt it necessary "to figure these things out like any other American, by studying [Reagan's] speeches and reading the newspapers." Thus was the economic policy of the United States divined by the secretary of the treasury.

What did the president want to do, for example, about taxes? Regan could only guess, based on the president's facial expression, on presidential fidgets, when the issue of taxes was raised. "I had the impression, based on observation of his body language rather than any words he had spoken in private, that he wanted to hold the line against new taxes." Should Regan and James Baker swap jobs? When they proposed it to the president, he simply smiled approvingly. "I did not know what to make of his passivity," Regan recalls. "He seemed to be absorbing a fait accompli rather than making a decision."

Regan was consistently stunned at the president's lack of involvement. Reagan never issued an order. He rarely asked a question. He provided no guidance at all. A Potemkin presidency, according to Regan, all form and no substance. Reagan only acted the part of president; he wasn't really president at all. Regan tries to explain:

> As President, Ronald Reagan acted on the work habits of a lifetime: he regarded his daily schedule as being something like a shooting script in which characters came and went, scenes were rehearsed and acted



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out, and the plot was advanced one day at a time, and not always in sequence. The Chief of Staff was a sort of producer, making certain that the star had what he needed to do best; the staff was like the crew, invisible behind the lights, watching the performance their behind-the-scenes efforts had made possible. . . . Checking off each event with a pencil after it ended and preparing himself for the next gave [Reagan's] life a regularity and tangible measure of accomplishment that . . . was deeply pleasing to him.

The result was "an environment where there seemed to be no center, no structure, no agreed policy." The policy-making talent generated huge amounts of paper, but no final decisions ever seemed to emerge from all this apparatus. In Regan's account, there was simply nobody at the top who made final decisions.

DURING HIS tenure at Treasury, Regan found himself increasingly critical of the way the president's staff seemed to encourage such passivity in the chief executive. They wanted to protect Reagan from controversy, and also to protect the public from the bold visions and the strong opinions that Regan felt certain burned deep inside the president. Regan agreed to become chief of staff because he wanted to allow Reagan to be more assertive, more decisive, more presidential: to "let Reagan be Reagan." And he tried. Regan reduced the number of Cabinet councils, centralized control over the chain of command, and sought to streamline the decision-making process so that the president could be more directly involved.

One of his first acts as chief of staff was to prepare a planning memorandum for the president on a range of controversial subjects that were likely to arise during the following year, including farm supports, protectionism, Social Security, and Western European defenses. The memorandum set forth overall priorities, and included detailed policy recommendations, specific presidential actions, and timetables. "What do you think?" he asked the president, expecting a substantive dialogue about the complex and somewhat daring initiatives he was proposing. " 'It's good,' the president replied, nodding in approval. 'It's really good, Don.' " Nothing more.

In the end, as we all know, Regan was fired. And he is bitter about that. He blames Nancy Reagan, other White House staffers, the news media, national security advisers McFarlane and Poin-


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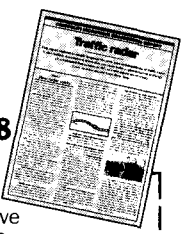

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dexter, and, above all, Ronald Reagan. Regan's failed effort to get Reagan involved in the substantive choices facing the president of the United States resulted in Regan himself being made a target. Criticized by the media for his lax supervision of the National Security Council staff (over which, he protests, the chief of staff has no direct control) and detested by insiders who resented his assertive role, Regan was scapegoated for the inevitable failings of an indifferent president.

AT LEAST, that's his story. But his story doesn't ring true, exactly. We have heard similar complaints before, with the same self-serving, self-pitying quality about them. David Stockman, in his own memoir, *The Triumph of Politics*, sought to place blame for the administration's mammoth budget deficits on Reagan's failure to get involved. "He conveyed the impression that since we all knew what needed to be done, we should simply get on with the job," Stockman chided. But there was more to it, according to Stockman, than simply getting on with the job. Cutting public spending or raising taxes required hard choices that the president was unprepared to make. Politics triumphed because Ronald Reagan wouldn't take the lead.

It is worth remembering that Regan and Stockman were on opposite sides of the economic debate during Reagan's first term. Regan was a confirmed supply-sider who assumed that tax cuts would generate more tax revenues, as people began to work harder and earn more money. Stockman insisted that tax increases would be necessary. Reagan did not shy away from this debate, however. Most of the White House staff was on Stockman's side, but Reagan ultimately sided with Regan. In other words, here is one instance in which Reagan was an assertive—indeed, a bullheaded—president.

There is a natural temptation to attribute lassitude to superiors who disagree with one's own wisdom. (How could he have been paying attention if he failed to comprehend the obvious superiority of my argument?) And there is a natural temptation to impute indolence to a superior who agrees too quickly with one's recommendations, without fully acknowledging their brilliance. (How could he have been alert if he failed to discuss the finer points of my argument?) Regan and Stockman ultimately came to the same conclusion about Reagan, but from opposite poles. All that they possessed in common were raging egos, which demanded of Reagan both complete acquiescence and sparkling attentiveness. When they failed to receive one or the other, they grew bitter.

In fact, the record will show that Reagan has been quite a decisive president, and deeply concerned about a whole range of issues. The paradoxical disparity between inputs and outputs—between the elaborate systems of policy formulation in the White House and the often ill-conceived blunderbuss that has emerged—is not due to Reagan's passivity. It is due, rather, to the peculiar character of Reagan's engagement. If anything, Reagan has been too personally involved in decisions—too passionate, too caring, too sentimental. Time and again, as these books reveal, he has decided issues on the basis of emotion rather than reason.

Reagan's blunders are owed to his failure to respect the process of policy-making. And his staff swiftly grasped that lack of respect. Forget the Cabinet councils, working groups, panels of experts, the briefing books. When Reagan's advisers wanted him to decide something in a certain way, they circumvented these established channels and manipulated his feelings.

When Regan wanted the president's go-ahead to reform the federal income tax system, for example, Regan devised a way to play on Reagan's emotions. As Regan tells it:

> As a way of introducing the subject, I asked him a question about his old employer, the General Electric Company: What does General Electric have in common with Boeing, General Dynamics, and 57 other big corporations?
>
> Reagan's interest was immediately aroused. He had fond memories of his days as a television host and traveling goodwill ambassador for GE, and a large number of anecdotes and stories about this experience.
>
> I don't know, he said, leaning forward in his chair and smiling. What *do* they have in common?
>
> "Let me tell you, Mr. President," I replied. "What these outfits have in common is that not one of them pays a penny in taxes to the United States government."
>
> *What?* the President said.
>
> His shock was genuine. A dumbfounded silence settled over his economic advisers. What unconventional idea was I trying to plant in the President's mind now?
>
> "Believe it or not, Mr. President," I continued, "your secretary paid more federal taxes last year than all of those giant companies put together."
>
> The President flushed, a sure sign of surprise and discomfort. I just can't believe that, he said.
>
> "I don't blame you for doubting it," I replied. "But it's the truth. . . . It's perfectly legal, but it's wrong, Mr. President, when a hardworking secretary pays more to support her government than 60 of the richest corporations in the land. The time has come to do something fundamental about the tax system. It's too complicated, it's grotesquely unfair, and it's a drag on the economy because it discourages competition."
>
> By now the President's cheeks were carmine and there was a spark of resolution in his eye.
>
> He said, I agree, Don, I just didn't realize that things had gotten that far out of line.
>
> I interpreted his words as an instruction to go full steam ahead with a proposal to overhaul the entire federal tax structure.

MARTIN ANDERSON offers another example, in some ways more chilling, of Reagan's style of self-assertion, of his staff's shrewd tendency to bypass the normal channels of policy-making through appeals to Reagan's emotions. When the Israelis began to bomb Beirut in June 1982, Michael Deaver, then deputy chief of staff, was upset. According to Anderson, Deaver lurched into the Oval Office, and the following exchange ensued:

> "Mr. President, I have to leave."
>
> The President was startled.
>
> "What do you mean?"
>
> "I can't be a part of this anymore," replied Deaver, "the bombings, the killing of children. It's wrong. And you're the one person on the face of the earth right now who can stop it. All you have to do is tell Begin you want it stopped."
>
> Reagan stared at Deaver with a look, as Deaver later described it, of "My God, what have we done?" and then asked his secretary to get Menachem Begin, the prime minister of Israel, on the phone. . . .
>
> When the call to Israel came through, Reagan told Begin bluntly that the shelling and bombing of Beirut had to stop. Reagan's last words were, "It has gone too far. You must stop it."
>
> In 20 minutes Begin called back and said it was done. The shelling and bombing was stopped. Reagan was somewhat incredulous and said, "I didn't know I had that kind of power."

But the master of the emotional manipulation of the president was William Casey, the crumpled wizard of the CIA. According to Anderson, Casey never missed an opportunity to play upon Reagan's fears and Reagan's sympathies. And here lies a clue as to why Reagan



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agreed to sell arms to Iran, the protestations of his secretaries of defense and state notwithstanding. William Buckley was the CIA's station chief in Lebanon when he was kidnapped on March 16, 1984. Anderson tells us that Casey wanted Buckley freed at all costs. In order to wring concessions out of the United States, Buckley's kidnappers had sent the CIA a videotape of Buckley's brutal torture, complete with agonizing sounds. "Appealing deeply to Reagan's emotional anguish," Casey then arranged for Reagan to see the sickening videotape. And thereafter Reagan would share Casey's intense commitment to free the hostages, almost regardless of the consequences.

THE WHITE HOUSE that emerges from these memoirs is a palace of intrigue, but it has its own unfortunate coherence. The intrigue consists, to be precise, in the attempts of advisers to outmaneuver one another to capture the heart, not the mind, of the president. Every conversation is an opportunity to play to his emotions; every chance encounter, an opening for an evocative anecdote to convince him to decide this way or that. The people surrounding Reagan continuously seek to make use of his feelings for their purposes. They feed him vivid stories and letters to illustrate particular positions, they fill his schedule with emotionally charged events and meetings, they prevent him from being alone with one of their competitors who might use the same tricks for opposite purposes, they plant pointed newspaper articles that he is sure to read.

Regan hated Nancy Reagan for the simple reason that she understands this game so well. After all, she has been playing it for decades. Her fascination with astrology was a minor irritant, really. What irked Regan most was that Nancy could outmaneuver him. She could orchestrate her husband's sentiments far better than Regan could. That, and not the zodiac, was how she could determine what Reagan would decide, far more effectively than could the president's chief of staff. And all the Cabinet councils, the working groups, the experts, the briefing books were irrelevant to this larger, inner drama. Regan understood this, and so did Nancy. In the end, the two of them found themselves in a tug of war over the president's heart. Regan's biggest frustration was he was not the wife.

Historians of the Reagan administration will certainly record a bold and decisive president—not the weak, indolent creature caricatured by Regan and Stockman. But history will also reveal a president without any appreciable capacity to make thoughtful decisions. The White House's sophisticated apparatus of policy development, of which Martin Anderson is so proud, was superseded by Ronald Reagan's boyish heart. Decisions *were* made, but as a result of the manner in which they were made, they bore little relation to the facts, the analysis, and the expertise on hand. We have had almost eight years of government by sentimental education.

ROBERT B. REICH

# CARDINAL SINS

## Inquisition
## by Edward Peters
(Free Press, 362 pp., $24.95)

## The Ratzinger Report:
## An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church
## by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger with Vittorio Messori
(Ignatius Press, 197 pp., $9.95 paper)

## The Theology of Joseph Ratzinger
## by Aidan Nichols
(T. & T. Clark, 338 pp., £9.95 paper)

For three centuries after his first appearance, the Grand Inquisitor was portrayed by Protestant and Enlightenment critics alike as a figure of unmitigated evil. It took Dostoyevsky to make him interesting. "Know that I, too, was in the wilderness, that I, too, fed upon locusts and roots, that I, too, blessed freedom," is the Inquisitor's reproach to Christ in *The Brothers Karamazov*. "But I woke up and refused to serve madness." Jesus' madness had been to give men salvation without also giving them the strength to choose it. The Inquisitor, in contrast, had taken away men's freedom, by terror, and thereby ensured their salvation. The price in this neat, heretical solution was paid by the Inquisitor himself. In Dostoyevsky's story, the very process of terrorizing had sapped the Inquisitor's own faith. Once a saintly hermit, he finally found himself unable to retain belief in the doctrine he was imposing. Power had destroyed it.

The life and work of Joseph Ratzinger would no doubt have interested Dostoyevsky. Once a radical theologian concerned above all with the liberation offered by Christ, Ratzinger is now the Vatican's chief imposer of theological obedience. Formerly a minor official at the Second Vatican Council and an intellectual disciple of Hans Küng, he is now John Paul II's closest confidant and Küng's judge. In the Western Hemisphere, it was Ratzinger who was behind the demotion of Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle, the firing of Father Charles Curran of Washington's Catholic University, and the 11-month silencing of liberation theologian Friar Leonardo Boff. Ratzinger was also directly or indirectly responsible for the most recent papal positions on in vitro fertilization, homosexuality, liberation theology, and the encyclical on East-West conflict, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. After John Paul II himself, there are few more significant figures in the Catholic Church.

Who is he? Six years after Ratzinger's appointment to the Prefecture, we are only beginning to find out. His office—he is prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—explains something. When it was originally created in 1588, it was called the Congregation of the Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition. As Edward Peters points out in his comprehensive survey of the history and mythology of the office, this



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may not be as damning as it sounds. Its historic role has been both to promote good doctrine and to protect the Church from heresy. Since 1588 it has wielded none of the power its mythologizers have claimed for it. In its supposed heyday—the 15th through 17th centuries—it was, in fact, extremely weak.

Set up after inquisitions were already under way in Rome, it was not responsible for the autonomous inquisitions in Spain, Portugal, and Venice, conducted by semi-independent papal appointees and local authorities. (The Spanish Inquisition, for example, was specifically requested by Isabella and Ferdinand of Spain in 1478 and was then incorporated within the Spanish state.) The Holy Office's real power diminished further through the 18th century, when it became an adjunct to the Index, the Vatican's official censor. In 1799 the Inquisition was actually abolished, only to be revived 15 years later with a writ more limited than ever to the papal states.

Italian nationalism restrained the Holy Office in the late 19th century. But as liberal, anti-clerical governments in Europe put pressure on independent churches, the attractions of a stronger, defensive link with Rome grew. In response, the Holy Office took on a new vigor. It merged with the Index in 1917 and became the chief theological adviser to the pope, who was now officially infallible. (Ex cathedra statements were pronounced infallible in 1870.) In 1965 the Second Vatican Council abolished the Index but retained and revamped the Holy Office as the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, while increasing the autonomy of the various national councils of bishops.

IT IS an ambiguous history, then; and one of the ironies is that it took the 20th century to produce a Roman Inquisition with universal clout. The decline of religious-based national polities has had the effect of strengthening transnational religious institutions. The explosion of Catholicism around the globe in the 20th century has actually increased the need for a more powerful center of doctrine. Joseph Ratzinger has felt few qualms, at least recently, about providing it.

Ratzinger grew up the son of a policeman in Hitler's Bavaria. Before becoming the pope's policeman, Ratzinger was a professional theologian. He was ordained in 1954 in the diocese of Munich and became a lecturer in dogmatics at Münster, Tübingen, and Regensburg, and a founder-member of the progressive theological periodical *Concilium*. An official at the Second Vatican Council and a keen defender of its reforms, he was made cardinal archbishop of Munich in 1977.

It was a fitting appointment. His training was rooted in the Bavarian tradition, which is to say, it was heavily influenced by Augustine. Augustine's emphasis on the weakness of fallen man, the necessity for divine grace, a distance from worldliness, and a healthy distrust of human reason and nature are central, of course, to German Protestantism—but to much of German Catholicism as well. Ratzinger, whose dissertation was about Augustine, was no exception. A particular influence was Johann Sailer, a Romantic theologian of the post-Enlightenment Catholic revival in Germany. His mid-19th-century concerns, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia, make interesting reading: "externalism, contempt for Christian mysticism, worldliness of the clergy, degradation of the pulpit by the treatment of secular topics, relaxation of ecclesiastical discipline, denial of the primacy of papal jurisdiction, efforts of the State to gain control of the Church, turbulent reforms within the Church, and a one-sided training of the mind in education." Over a century later, it would be difficult to find a more concise summary of Ratzinger's own priorities.

THE GREAT MERIT of Aidan Nichols's dense, scholarly study of Ratzinger's theology is that it places Ratzinger in the context and language of this abiding, Germanic Augustinianism. It is an emphasis that manages to cut through the usual, unhelpful categories of left and right, progressive and reactionary, to focus on the arguments of the Church rather than the preoccupations of the world. Ratzinger's central conviction (and it runs from his earliest to his most recent writings) is that men are too weak to generate their own meaning or salvation. Both have to be received. Both, rather, *have* been received—in a particular historical moment: the incarnation of God.

The awe at the spirit of God made flesh in Jesus permeates all Ratzinger's work, and indeed his attitude to theology as such. Theology is the elucidation and deepening of what has already been revealed, rather than the quest to discover what we do not yet know. The model is not the philosopher who receives nothing, but the saint who has received too much—less Descartes than Mary, "who humbly opened herself, like a glass that receives God's dark mystery." That does not mean that revealed truth cannot be deepened, even occasionally by the insights of error. In his *Theology of History in Saint Bonaventure*, Ratzinger writes: "*Revelatio* refers not to the letter of scripture, but to the understanding of the letter. And that understanding can be increased." But it does mean that the source of all Christian wisdom is God, not man.

Self-realization for the Christian comes "not through what he does, but through what he accepts." The New Testament is a "matter of announcing to man the unthinkable, novel, free Act of God, something which cannot be drawn up out of the mental depths of man, because it announces God's unreckonable, gracious decision." In the liturgy, what is distinctive "does not come from what *we do* but from the fact that something is *taking place* here that all of us together cannot 'make.'" Ratzinger says at one point to the Italian journalist Vittorio Messori in the conversation published as *The Ratzinger Report*: "The Church is not *our* Church, which we could dispose of as we please. She is, rather, *His* Church."

THIS IS the essential basis for Ratzinger's "authoritarianism." He believes in an inalienable truth, wedded to an institution, cemented in a moment of history. The extraordinary nature of revelation suggests that it cannot be tampered with, least of all from below. And the tragic, passive view Ratzinger holds of human nature—more in tune with Lutheranism than with traditional Catholicism—lies behind his radical lack of faith in the goodness of fallen man, and so underpins the severity of his discipline. But the Augustinian notion of grace is also at the core of his "radicalism." The redemption, when received, is of a complete, transcendent, almost mystical nature.

The great contrast usually drawn between the young "liberal" Ratzinger and the old "conservative" Ratzinger tends to miss this point. These phases represent two sides of the same Augustinian coin. In his "liberal" period, Ratzinger's inspiration was always a transcendent understanding of divine, ahistorical grace at work upon the Church. That was the core of his defense of the Second Vatican Council's reappraisal of tradition. As a founder of *Concilium*, he was a firm champion of the re-



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formed liturgy, the new use of the vernacular, the revived emphasis on scripture, the elevation of the episcopate vis-à-vis the papacy, and communion in both bread and wine. He saw much of this as a cleansing of the historical encumbrances of the 19th and 20th centuries to let in a fresher, purer ecclesiastical air. His enthusiasm, for example, for the Catholic rediscovery of the historical Jesus and of scripture is clear:

> It breathes the "smell of the earth" of the land of the patriarchs; the unmistakable tone in which the prophets talked. . . . It gives us the voice of Jesus Christ—in the striking Aramaic phrases that were handed down untranslated; we hear him speak his native language; we meet him across the gulf of centuries, as he lived, a man among men.

Together with this is a sense of liberation from earthly bonds that a revived Catholicism could generate. In his 1960 *Christian Brotherhood*, he writes: "The mystery of Christ is the mystery of the removal of barriers." He refers to the barriers of nationalism, class, and the reluctance of the Church to confront the world, in that order. In his 1968 *Introduction to Christianity*, Ratzinger writes of the timeless gift Christ extends to the world: "After the lance-thrust that ends his earthly life, his existence is completely open; now he is entirely 'for': the beginning of a new definitive community of men with one another."

A PASSION for this liberating, transcendent community explains his otherwise mystifying enthusiasm for so much of modern Catholicism that other Church "conservatives" find distasteful. Ratzinger hails what he sees as the divine intervention of the Holy Spirit in the practice (if not some of the theology) of the revivalist Christianity of the Third World, in the charismatic movement throughout the Church, and in the anti-Marxist, Christian preference for the poor adopted by most priests and laity in South America, Africa, and Asia. He argues for the incorporation of many Third World practices into Western faith. He favors Asian and black music as a new focus for liturgical expression. And Ratzinger describes these developments not as the achievement of men, but as the work of God. These views were expressed again in *The Ratzinger Report*.

Ratzinger's hostility to the politicization of religion—from Marxist liberation theology to the Catholic capitalists of the American right—is also based on his view that being *a*political is Christianity's authentic political stance. With Augustine, he holds that otherworldliness released the "inner freedom which enabled the martyrs to counterpoise the conviction of faith to State authority, the interior power of truth to the external power of earthly force." This does not mean that he advocates complete withdrawal, but rather a stance of opposition to the world, a stance that is necessarily political, but only incidentally so.

Hence, for example, his attitude to the 1960s, an attitude that sharply distinguishes him from his political neoconservative acolytes. Ratzinger argues in *Church, Ecumenism and Politics* that the radical resurrection of concern with the "origin and purpose of the whole" of creation that typified the '60s was essentially a step forward, insofar as it scorned shallow materialism. His serious argument with the '60s is only with its *political* solution, with Marxism, which he accords a deeper philosophical respect than many of its smug opponents. Ratzinger answers it with the transcendent radicalism of a purified Church.

THIS APOLITICAL Augustinianism is classically reflected in the recent encyclical on East and West. What mattered was not what each bloc had revealed about men in history, nor what prudence might indicate in choosing between the two. What mattered was simply revelation's judgment of the foundation of each: the atheism of the collective East and the materialism of the capitalist West. Politics was seen from the perspective of eternity. Naturally it enraged those who prefer to see eternity from the perspective of politics. William F. Buckley found time to read the *New York Times* summary and wrote an angry, anti-"moral equivalence" riposte, and (non-Catholic) columnist William Safire's deepest theological argument was to accuse the pope of being a "decade out of date on his geopolitics." In a sense, though, they were right. The politics *was* crude. It was supposed to be.

Otherworldliness, however, carries a decisive risk. It can lead to an alienation from the very world the Church needs to conquer. This other side of the Augustinian coin was the central worry of the Second Vatican Council. Ratzinger's interpretation of the Council's mission of renewal differs from more conventional understandings. Whereas Ratzinger sees the Council as a "recentering" of the Church from the standpoint of transcen-


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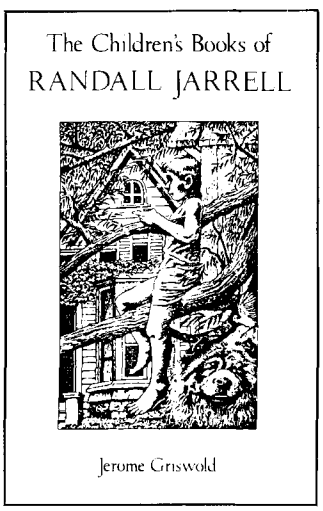


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dent truth (a peculiarly Augustinian approach), many of its actual participants saw it as an opening to the world as it then existed, a learning from the world, an interpretation of divine grace at work through history (essentially a Thomist understanding). It is important, perhaps, that Ratzinger, as a minor official, never participated, as only a bishop could, in the collective spiritual guardianship—and experience—of that event. John Paul II did. The most telling difference between the pope and the prefect is John Paul II's more successful blend of Augustinian otherworldliness and Thomist trust. His admonitions, while increasingly firm, have never lacked the compassion and optimism that ally themselves with a countervailing confidence in God's will working its way through nature. Ratzinger is altogether a more jaundiced figure.

BY INTERPRETING the Council his way, and by maintaining a continuity between the Augustinianism of his early and later career, Ratzinger rallies a powerful defense of the case that "it is not I who have changed, but others." But he has missed perhaps a central paradox in his own theology. His bleakness, while theologically a way in which the extremity of grace can be radically described, is—once in power—a recipe for authoritarianism. The same view that holds that man is hopeless and needs the mystery of God holds that man is hopeless and needs the discipline of authority. For these reasons, the elevation of Ratzinger to the prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was a particularly fateful decision. The very same theology that could describe the mystery of God, His unknowability, His radical gift of grace, could be used to justify the lack of any trust in the work of the Church below, and the necessity to maintain absolute conformity to the mysterious dictates received from above. What Ratzinger's elevation unleashed—the wild card in Ratzinger's development—was the factor of power. His theology did not change. But its new context was to transform the purity of its intent.

The Dostoyevskian ironies are acute, and they are getting sharper. The theologian who stressed the apolitical as Christians' first resort has become an official who has sacrificed theological argument for political coercion and control. The otherworldly cleric has become the first prefect to give an extended, published interview to the international press (*The Ratzinger Report*). The thinker who wrote above all about the central conceptions of the faith, of the mystery of the Incarnation, of the Last Things, of the core truths of Christianity, has begun to show signs of a creeping obsession with sex, and concern with the passing phenomena of a secular agenda.

WITH RATZINGER'S elevation, the case against him has most often been viewed in the Western press as the case for democracy against authoritarianism in the Church. It is perhaps worth stating that nothing could be further from the truth. The Church is not a democracy and could not possibly be so. A democracy is founded upon the primacy of individual rights, in which the public good—itself the creation of the individuals who debate it—is an entity that may change. The truths of the Church are given, not created, are unchanging, not malleable, are vested in authority, not in individuals. So long as this is the debate between Ratzinger and his critics, Ratzinger deserves to win.

Where the argument really starts—and it is a complicated one—is in the scope of Rome's teaching authority, or magisterium. The First Vatican Council's establishment of papal infallibility ascribed to the pope the powers always ascribed to the college of bishops and the pope together: "infallibility in faith and morals." But it did so in extremely prescribed cases: ex cathedra pronouncements, of which there have been two in history, both dealing with uncontroversial doctrines. The scope of Rome's authority, outside these pronouncements (and none of Ratzinger's initiatives have taken this form), is therefore still in some doubt.

But even if we assume that Rome has complete authority "in faith and morals" outside of ex cathedra pronouncements, the Church has never authoritatively claimed the right to dictate the particular moral decisions of individuals within the Church. There, conscience, under pastoral guidance, has to be left to work. For example, while the Church might say that anger is always wrong, there may be circumstances in which it can be excused, mitigated, or even can lead to some good: the anger directed at a criminal, or at violence, or at oppression. The judgment of these cases must be on an individual basis. So, too, in theology. There is a difference between the rejection of Church doctrine outright and the obedient questioning of the reasoning of doctrine in particular cases. The Church has historically defended this space for those obediently attempting to live Christian lives. This "freedom" does not deny the authority of the Church. It merely recognizes that moral and theological wisdom has to be worked out in individual lives, with their complexities and compromises.

Ratzinger the theologian accepts the tension. In his 1975 *Principles of Christian Morality*, he writes that Christ "linked admission to the Kingdom of God and exclusion from it with fundamental moral decisions, which are consequences intimately related to the way God is conceived." But he has also defended individual space, even to the extent of suggesting that Christians' moral experience can inform Church doctrine. For example, he agrees that the Church's former teaching that sex is solely for procreation has now deepened to an understanding that it is also for personal development. That transition came from the experience of modern Christians in marriage, and from theology itself. Ratzinger has also written that the three major forces for the development of Church doctrine are the Christian and human experience of the Church at large, the work of scholars, and the "watchful attention, listening, and deciding undertaken by the teaching authority," in that order.

BUT RATZINGER'S latest forays suggest, alas, that once in power, he has begun to scorn what he once put at the forefront of the development of the Church: the ordinary moral experience of Christians. Consider three cases.

First, the role of women. Not women priests, but women in society. He describes them, in *The Ratzinger Report*, as the receptacles "of motherhood, of gratitude, of contemplation, of beauty." His challenge to women in the 1980s is to live up to the virtues of the Virgin Mary. In itself, that is hardly objectionable to a Catholic. But what is remarkable is how much is left out. No other avenue of achievement or self-fulfillment is countenanced. The implication is that there is nothing of value for the Christian view of women in the work, creativity, or independence that women in the West now partly enjoy. On the contrary, women have paid

> the highest price to the new society and its values. . . . What is the woman to do when the roles inscribed in her biology have been denied and perhaps even ridiculed? If her



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wonderful capacity to give love, help, solace, warmth, solidarity has been replaced by the economistic and trade union mentality of the "profession," by this typical masculine concern?

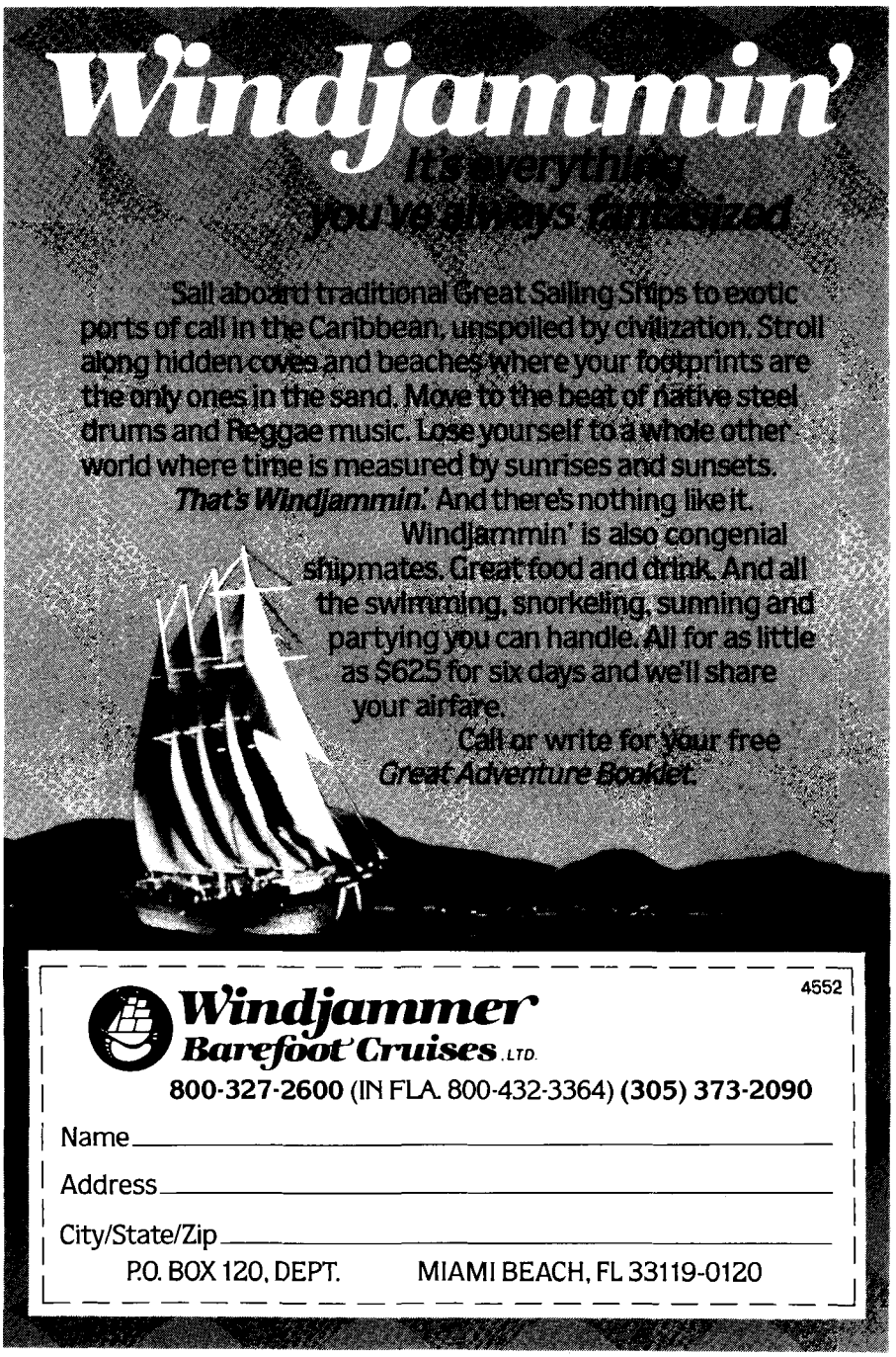
Is Ratzinger really saying that any form of "professional" work is destructive of the "roles inscribed in [female] biology"? And does the massive moral experience of working women, who have also struggled to lead Catholic lives, have nothing to say to this judgment? Is "solace" incompatible with a mother who devotes herself in part to a world other than the family? Is love a capacity necessarily destroyed by work? Has Ratzinger any evidence to support such claims?

SECOND, on homosexuality. The Vatican's 1986 letter—which described gay men and women as victims of an "objective disorder"—was a radical break with all three elements originally discerned by Ratzinger: tradition, scholarship, and the moral experience of the Church. It took even conservatives by surprise. In 1975, for the first time in modernity, the (pre-Ratzinger) Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith recognized that there was something called inherent homosexuality. Previously, there had only been homosexual acts, chosen by heterosexual people, which were invariably wrong. (The first condemnation of such acts was not made until 1179, at the Third Lateran Council, which also condemned moneylenders, heretics, Jews, Muslims, and mercenaries.) The Church's new position was that the state of homosexuality was not wrong, since it was involuntary, and sin has to be chosen. What was wrong, rather, was the chosen, genital expression of homosexuality. This may sound casuistic, but there are few other ways to accept the immorality of homosexual activity while showing compassion and understanding for homosexuals who also happen to be made in the image of God. The 1975 document was a model of such casuistic compassion.

Ratzinger's letter, in the middle of the AIDS crisis, was noticeable for its extraordinary lack of compassion. Nowhere in the document was it stated, along the lines of 1975, that homosexuality is not voluntarily acquired. Some of its clauses read chillingly like comparable Church documents produced in Europe in the 1930s. In a reference to violence and prejudice against homosexuals, it argued that if correct doctrines were not defended clearly, then "neither the Church nor society at large should be surprised when other distorted notions and practices gain ground." And its central point was to remove the moral neutrality of the state of homosexuality: "Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder." What can this possibly mean, except that the condition is *morally* disordered?

The idea that the new perspective "finds support in the more secure findings of the natural sciences" is about as convincing as Ratzinger's obscure references to the "biological" roles of women. The biblical scholarship is also disappointing: the reference to Christ's mention of Sodom in Matthew suggests He was warning the disciples against sodomy, rather than warning the towns to which He sent them against inhospitality. It is hard to avoid the impression, especially given the supreme rigor of Ratzinger's own biblical and theological training, that the document was a political rather than a theological exercise.

Third, on the teaching authority of the Church as a whole, Ratzinger has pushed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the necessity of precise obedience in a way that calls into question the space normally assigned to personal conscience. In matters of theological orthodoxy, he has attempted to enforce a uniformity that makes no distinction between disobedience and questioning obedience. On this point, the contrast between Ratzinger the policeman and Ratzinger the theologian is particularly sharp. Ratzinger's 1954 study of Augustine noted that Augustine's theology grew out of a polemic against error, adding that this shows that *without* error "movement of a living, spiritual kind is hardly thinkable." Writing as prefect to Charles Curran on July 25, 1986, he argued that "the faithful must accept not only the infallible magisterium. They are to give the religious submission of intellect and will to the teaching which the supreme pontiff or the college of bishops enunciate on faith and morals when they exercise the authentic magisterium, *even if they do not intend to proclaim it with a definitive act*" (my italics).

The scope for Church theologians to question the doctrines of the Church is a problematic one. It is a fair concern of Rome that seminarians and lay people should not be misled as to the teachings of the Church by dissenting theologians acting in an authoritative context. But that does not mean that such questionings of doctrine cannot—or should not—take place at all within a Catholic context. Catholic University's compromise in letting Curran retain tenure, but restricting him to teaching on a non-ecclesiastical faculty "in moral theology and/or ethics," strikes a reasonable balance. It is also conceivable that Curran could be maintained on an ecclesiastical faculty as long as in his teaching, he distinguished clearly between his own and the Church's views. What is catastrophic both for the future of the faith and for maintaining the confidence of intelligent, obedient Catholics in the Church is that no questioning should be tolerated at all. Ratzinger's letter even implies that acquiescent silence is no longer enough. This suffocation of reason in the Church carries all the hallmarks of a self-fulfilling strategy.

THE METAMORPHOSIS of Joseph Ratzinger from Augustinian theologian to Augustinian policeman, and finally to policeman, may in part be due to the metamorphosis of the Church itself. The forces of change have been so great in the Church during the past two decades that some form of simple assertion of authority may have a prudential justification. John Paul II, however, has balanced Ratzinger's zeal with a more pragmatic and humane approach. Together, they have played a "good cop, bad cop" routine with recalcitrant faithful. Ratzinger's great gift to a Church all too easily distracted by the world is to call the faithful back to the fundamentals. But it is difficult not to feel dismayed by the way in which his earlier inspiration has ceded to the dictates of coercion, and his theological distrust of fallen man has translated so easily into disdain for Christians trying to live obediently in modernity. The man who might have guided the Church through reason has resorted to governing by force. In some ways, Ratzinger was his own first victim as Grand Inquisitor.

Or it may, of course, be that the love of truth is incompatible with the enforcement of truth. That, after all, is Dostoyevsky's half-suggestion. It is certainly at the core of some of the most powerful objections to Catholicism ever made. But Dostoyevsky—and the Church—provide a half-solution. After the Inquisitor rages at Jesus, he waits for a reply: "The old man would have liked Him to say something, however bitter and terrible. But He suddenly approached the old man and kissed him gently on his bloodless, aged lips." That kiss is a simple reminder that Christian truth may be painful, but without love it is also unbearable.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

# THE PRICE OF GRACE

## A Common Room: Essays 1954-1987 by Reynolds Price

(Atheneum, 405 pp., $23.95)

## Good Hearts by Reynolds Price

(Atheneum, 275 pp., $18.95)

Any male Southern writer worth his grits must bear up under a certain amount of unfair and generally pointless comparison with William Faulkner. It comes with the territory, as they say. But Reynolds Price has had to tolerate more than his share, and for reasons largely irrelevant to his work. It began with a coincidence. Price's first novel, *A Long and Happy Life*, came out the same year Faulkner died, in 1962, a symbolic torch-passing for those inclined to see it as such. If that were not enough to give influence-hounds the scent, the same novel went on to win that year's William Faulkner Foundation Award.

For lazier reviewers, it was hardly necessary to read the novel: this was a Faulkner epigone, clear and simple. Those who bothered would have thought their suspicions confirmed by the novel's first sentence. A serpentine creature of almost 200 words, it looks as though it crawled straight out of Yoknapatawpha County. But the sentence deceives. It is the only one quite like it in the book. The prose that bodies forth the tale of Rosacoke Mustian and her barely requited love for Wesley Beavers is, for the most part, closely pruned, quite unlike Faulkner's sprawling verbal undergrowth.

Absent as well are other hallmarks of the Faulkner style—the incantatory iterations, the neologisms, the poetic inflation. Price, in fact, favored a more clinched-in rhetoric, a rhetoric of understatement that owed more to Hemingway (an influence he acknowledges in one of the more self-revealing essays in *A Common Room*) than to Faulkner. Still, since Price was Southern, wrote about country people, and sometimes used dialect, the critics persisted. Over the years, Price complains, "It has been all but mandatory in discussions of my fiction to claim—and regret if not lament—the influence of William Faulkner."

Misleading as all this is, it is hardly necessary to rally to Price's defense. The 57 essays assembled in *A Common Room* do a more than adequate job on their



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own. Dating from 1954 to 1987 and spanning Price's productive career as a novelist, poet, playwright, and professor of English, they show how different Price's ambitions are—narrower, in a sense, but also more tightly harnessed to considerations of craft. The essays, variously personal, critical, and hortatory, also make for an illuminating *autobiographia literaria*, as revealing about Price's life and background as they are about his literary tastes and designs.

PRICE, one quickly learns, is a writer firmly rooted in "one dear perpetual place," that place being the gently rolling tobacco and cotton country of east-central North Carolina. To those who know it, it's pleasant enough country at the right season and the right time of day, but it can also turn dry, dusty, and red-clay mean during the long hot bake of summer. Hard country, in other words: it's the sort of place that doesn't leave people too much leeway, and for which, as a result, folks develop a wary, grudging love. Not surprisingly, it tends to lose many of its talented young to more hospitable climes.

What kept Price at home, or at least within a very short drive of his native Macon, was people, kith and kin. Among the former are the South's two extremes: overworked and underpaid blacks and the fading remnants of the old planter aristocracy. Both types serve as secondary characters in Price's novels, though not merely as thickeners of the social soup: they are always vivid presences, strongly individualized. Still, the people Price knows, and the ones who figure centrally in his fiction, are the white upper yeomanry. Small farmers (or former sharecroppers), skilled mechanics, shopkeepers, salesmen, and clerks—they are the people Jefferson idealized and, to a large extent, the people who still keep the South running.

Raised with modest social ambitions—the more driven or fortunate rise into the solid middle or upper middle classes, but even to them the yuppie creed of ever-upward is anathema—they live by the Protestant virtues of work and faith. If their lives often turn out to be bitterly hard and disappointing, they are not the kind to blame others or the system. They're far more likely to blame themselves, their moral failings; and if faith can't save them from guilt, they may turn in desperation to the bottle or to some other crutch to help them go silently to their graves. All is not a Vale of


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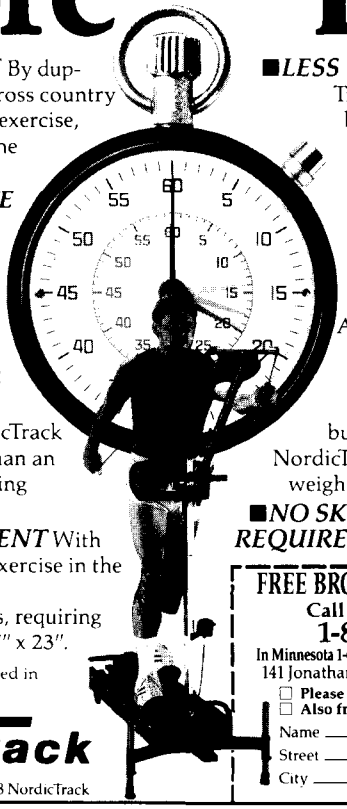

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Tears, though. It sounds corny, but they live for family, even though the bonds of kinship as often strangle as sustain. Most also live with hope of grace, which more than anything else can make the hard life seem worth living.

Price has paid close attention to these people, his family early on becoming a source of fascination and mystery. There was, for one, an alcoholic father, an insurance salesman who struggled through the Great Depression and who, the night Reynolds was born, swore to give up the bottle if his wife made it through a particularly difficult labor. Price came to wonder what he owed this troubled but deeply loving man for keeping that difficult pledge. And, in one sense, Price's fiction is the answer: it is both a long meditation on sacrifice and indebtedness and an expression of gratitude.

Price owes perhaps an even greater debt to the women of his family (and also to a number of outstanding women teachers who quite literally changed his life). Of one particularly cherished aunt who, during all his childhood years of moving around North Carolina, remained a fixed point in Macon, the embodiment of rootedness and home, he recalls that she served "all the functions of an ideal grandmother—unquestioned love and generosity, without the rip-tides of parental love." The ties with his mother, like those with his father, were more complicated. In "A Vast Common Room," an essay that explores the hermaphroditic nature of the artist, Price relates how his curiosity about his mother—"noted for youthful rebellion but then for impeccable loyalty to my father"—drove him one day "to write in a female voice, one whose atmosphere chimed in my ears with the timbre of my mother's lost voice, which I no longer remember." The book that issued from this compulsion was *Kate Vaiden*, to my mind Price's best novel to date, and powerful precisely because of the steady force of the protagonist's voice. As Price explains:

> However far my Kate ventured in rebellion and independence, she achieved in her voice and in all her acts a credible expression of my mother's own spiritual potential—a life whose courage and headlong drive I might have awarded my mother had I been able and were it not a life with even more pain than hers.

HOW WE LEARN to handle the complicated "rip-tides" of love, and not just parental love, is Price's great theme, present from his first novel to his most recent. His constant attention to this question, and his quiet handling of its complex domestic ramifications, make him, finally, a very different writer from Faulkner. Faulkner's sights were set on something more grand, or grandiose: the creation of a mythic world in which a series of tragic destinies play themselves out. Price, more like Eudora Welty or E. M. Forster (two authors who are paid deep homage in *A Common Room*), is concerned with the problem of connecting.

What is more, as a number of these essays suggest, Price has found his own answer. It is work—steady, habitual attention to one's given trade. Work alone, he writes, "has freed me for the attempt to understand, if not control, disorder in myself and in those I love. It has even freed me at times to participate in the richest, most dangerous mystery of all—the love of what otherwise I should have feared and fled, a few human beings." In urging his solution on his readers and, no doubt, on his many fortunate students, Price sounds ever so much like the person I suspect his parents intended—the good, if unchurched, Protestant. (And it is not irrelevant that Price's long-time academic specialty is the Puritan poet par excellence, Milton.)

Price's hard-earned Protestant wisdom is an admirable guide to self-sufficiency, and to much else as well. But as a foundation on which to build fictions, it poses problems. A vision too strongly imposed upon the various world and its even more various inhabitants can lead to formula, a danger that threatens even Price's greatest gift, his powers of characterization. Price's characters, with occasional exceptions (notably the highly autobiographical protagonist of *Love and Work*) are shrewd rustics, blunt, funny, and honest folk who talk about themselves and their plights with the same sort of light irony one finds in the better country music songs—the "work your fingers to the bone, what do you get? Bony fingers!" variety. But it's not the countriness that troubles. Price's populism is never condescending. The problem is that Price knows his characters al-

## RINGING WORDS

They have closed the prison where they had you teach
The killers no one else would touch. Brutal,
Mercurial, in lessons they would leap
Catlike in a twinkling to the desk
Or throw you to the ground and in distraction
Toy with you, half-sated tigers with
Unappetizing fare, but flanked by foes.

So the last casualties have followed you
Into a daylight too much for their eyes,
The wards and keeps flushed out in back of them.
If many stayed down, tormented by their boredom
To deeps of vehemence not to be calmed,
Bleeding mad, their babble like the birds',
Some died. The walls would crumble around them all.

"Forget," said the voice politic, "that place
Sacramental in the crime it fed
Even as it punished it. Our health
Requires this." Our. Our. My spared limbs
Tremble with a passion the old rue
Will punish later, "Some memorial
Is needed to appall the mind," I said,

"Lest all he had resisted when it mattered
Little any more, loosen like Proteus,
Shrug away its hides, and sink oblivious
To all its harm—yes, feeling the bright blood move,
The freshened sinews round the strengthened bone,
Feeding its stripes into the sea."

MARY KINZIE



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most too well. Lacking an inner opacity, they sometimes seem too dependent on their creator and the vision they were created to serve.

Yet for all that, Price makes us want to know his people. We want to, because they come across as attractive and nearly as wise as Price himself. Nearly, I emphasize, because they almost all have great difficulty connecting, a problem that stems from excessive expectations—theirs of others, others of them. We find these characters and the familiar blocked situations once again in Price's most recent novel, *Good Hearts*, which takes up the lives of Rosacoke and Wesley Beavers some 30 years after their rocky courtship in *A Long and Happy Life*.

THE PROBLEM raised in that first novel was how a young woman of unusually subtle intelligence could resolve her unhappy love for a man who, while attractive and good-hearted, seems her intellectual and spiritual lesser. A standard variation on the classic small-town romance, in other words, but Price worked the familiar clay in quite marvelous ways, showing how a deep mutual attraction plays havoc with Rosacoke and Wesley's more obvious incompatibilities. The plot complicates when a tussle in the field leaves Rosacoke pregnant, and Wesley, an ex-Navy man and avid motorcyclist, unable to stay put in rural Afton, North Carolina, returns to the bigger lights of Norfolk, Virginia, unaware of what their lovemaking has produced. Even when he learns of Rosacoke's pregnancy and returns home to do the honorable thing, he cannot find the right words to satisfy Rosacoke. All seems doomed until both take part in a Christmas pageant at the Baptist church and Rosacoke is drawn by the laden symbolism of the occasion to see and accept Wesley for what he is. Marriage seems inevitable by novel's end.

To those readers who favor down-to-earth solutions, the conclusion of *A Long and Happy Life* may have seemed somewhat contrived: Was grace doing forced duty here? I, for one, felt that the resolution served as a fitting close to the book's larger theme: the mixed blessings of generation (there are other complicated births in the novel, both leading to deaths) and the mysterious claims and transformations involved in the engendering act. It also worked because Price convinced me that Rosacoke's perceptions and understanding were attuned to something more liminal than hard common sense. And furthermore, it was not, by any stretch, a snugly happy ending.

The novel left readers wondering about what might happen after this attractive though unevenly matched couple made it to the altar. *Good Hearts* tells us. Rosacoke (now Rosa) and Wesley have made their way from Afton to Raleigh, raised a son, and seen him settle into his own career and marriage. Rosa and Wesley both have respectable jobs—she as a secretary in a university English department, he as a car mechanic—and though both stand out at what they do, neither views work as the royal road to self-fulfillment. They don't even live vicariously through their son, who, though loving, is a bit on the dull side. "Horace turned out as satisfactorily as we have any reason to expect, and I'd write him a good job reference tomorrow, but till I get a lot older than now, I won't be needing many days of his time," writes Rosa with her usual candor. Worse yet, Horace is married to an upwardly mobile schemer who plots her life with dining and decoration tips from *Family Circle* and *Southern Living*.

Despite life's small disappointments, Rosa and Wesley seem to have found contentment. They appear easy with each other, comfortable with their routines. But then one day in late December of what seems a recent year, after a night of troubled dreaming, Wesley decides to leave Rosa without warning or explanation. The dream is of failure, and Wesley's journey westward, ending in Nashville (where so many songs of dashed hopes are made), is his last effort to fan some spark of significance before giving up on his life. Wesley, we learn, suffers from what at first seems absurdly monstrous vanity, a ludicrous (though not altogether unjustified) feeling that he is God's gift to women, and that, in his marriage with Rosa, he has wasted his specialness. Worse yet, he thinks, Rosa has insufficiently valued his gift—or never even needed it.

Wesley easily could seem a pathetic, even contemptible character, but Price's achievement is to make the wayward quest of this failed Golden Boy seem neither trivial nor vapid. Wesley comes across as at least as complex and dignified a character as, for instance, Rabbit Angstrom, Updike's *homme moyen sensuel*. Wesley's imagination is obsessively, al-


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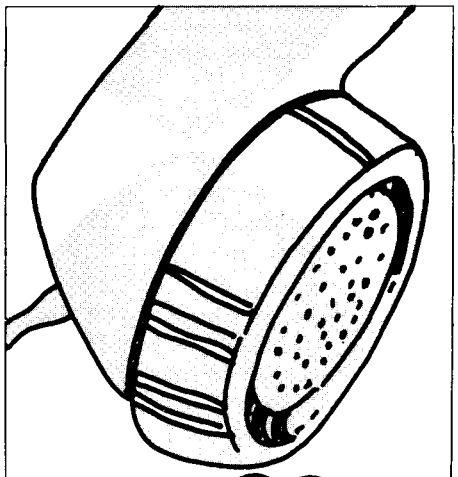

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most demonically erotic, but we are shown that the ways of eros can lead to a kind of knowledge. Even more, Wesley recognizes the limits of his knowledge, and does so precisely because of what he has learned in his marriage with Rosa. Long exposure to her patient if sometimes scouring intelligence has left him with an ironic perspective on his fantasies. He knows that what he wants is crazy, but he is at war with himself, and the struggle is precisely what makes for his complexity.

Rosa doesn't feel the same urge as Wesley to set off on a journey of self-discovery and renewal; she has always been far ahead of him. At the same time, she knows that she has lived too much for Wesley's love, even while being unable to love him in the way that would make him happy. (This, obviously, is neither a character nor a predicament to send shivers of delight through militant feminists' hearts.) She yearns for Wesley's return but doesn't really believe that some fundamental change in herself is possible. Nor, after searching her heart, does she believe that one is called for.

THE AGENCY of resolution, here as in *A Long and Happy Life*, is the mysterious power of Providence. We are asked to accept a high, purposive design behind seemingly unrelated events (Wesley's departure and the attack of a rapist) as well as preternatural forms of communication (Rato Mustian, Rosa's extremely eccentric brother, has a dream hinting at his sister's violation). The usual laws of cause and effect collapse in the novel because the author, like his characters, is convinced that there is a divine purpose behind mortal affairs. There is even a theological premise at work in Price's novel—that we sin in order to be upbraided, and that by experiencing God's will in this way we draw closer not only to God but also to what he intends us to be. Price, again, is a very serious Reformed Christian.

And his novels, I would argue, are variations on a Christian pastoral theme. They evoke Arcadias peopled by fallen creatures who struggle to regain a lost happiness, and sometimes, through grace, succeed. Even though *Good Hearts* is set largely in cities (with occasional dashes to the country), the atmosphere—the moral atmosphere, one might say—is decidedly rural. The novel, in fact, offers a quiet comment on the tensions between rusticity and urbanity. The rural ethos of the characters, their countrified ways of seeing and saying things, is at odds with the surrounding urban world and the lost souls who occupy it. But one wishes Price did far more with this conflict. Instead, he leaves it in the background, focused, for example, in the tense relations between Rosa and her daughter-in-law.

PRICE'S FAILURE to address this tension more directly in *Good Hearts* is no small weakness. For one thing, it leaves the novel, despite its many strengths, with too little to do. The heavily psychological examination of Rosa and Wesley's troubles grows attenuated—indeed, the last part of the book labors 36 pages beyond what could have been the novel's more satisfying conclusion. Yet as closely scrutinized as the rupture and reconciliation are, Price never gives any strong indication that the larger culture (television, jobs, the nature of life in Raleigh) plays a part in the Beavers' crisis. Those elements of the larger world are present, but they have no power. As a result, Wesley and Rosa live in something close to a historical void.

In his essay "Country Mouse, City Mouse," Price makes a very persuasive case for the importance of an "early and passionate relation between a writer and nature." Paraphrasing Wordsworth, he argues that it is only "permanent or permanently recurring objects which provide a sufficient reserve of imagery, an adequate sounding board for any but the most claustrophobic novel." He contends, moreover, that a number of otherwise excellent writers, including Baudelaire, Poe, and James, "maimed their work (or some portion of it)" by relying too narrowly on the imagery of city life. But Price's essay does not simply advocate rusticity for rusticity's sake. An intimate connection with rural life has provided the fullest writers, such as Dickens and Tolstoy, with the equipment to take on the larger world, the city as well as the country. Yet in Price's view (a view he might have revised since 1964), there have been since Forster no writers possessed of "the great whole rural-urban vision."

True or not, Price's remarks point to a shortcoming in his own work. Few contemporary writers of such consummate literary skill possess so enviably rich a grounding in the permanent world as Price. Yet he has insufficiently pressed



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his advantage. So far we have had sallies on the wider world, but no full-scale invasion. In *Kate Vaiden*, for example, the Great Depression and World War II swell into something more than background; they become palpable forces. Finally, though, Price seems to back away from a full exploration of their power over people and events. Doing so, he allows them to subside into devices of nostalgia, and we are left with a merely sentimental evocation of the past. This is the danger of a pastoral novel that lacks a firm historical vision. The novels that Price most admires chart not only the progress of the individual soul but also the progress of the age—and, indeed, the impingements of the latter upon the former. But using the still powerful idiom of the rural South, Price has brilliantly inscribed the story of the modern-day pilgrim's progress. He is our age's Bunyan.

JAY TOLSON

Jay Tolson is literary editor of *The Wilson Quarterly*.


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# THE PERFECT PENSION

## Social Security: The System That Works by Merton C. and Joan Broadshaug Bernstein

(Basic Books, 307 pp., $21.95)

Along with free public education and the Homestead acts, Social Security stands as one of America's monumental contributions to practical utopianism. Social Security drives political conservatives and laissez-faire economists wild, because it socializes a portion of the national income. It remains extraordinarily popular despite the individualism of most Americans. Throughout the program's 53-year lifetime, the political and economic right wing has repeatedly claimed that Social Security would lead to fiscal and moral ruin. Yet the system continues to thrive, providing economic security for the elderly and peace of mind for their grown children, with a minimum of coercion and a maximum of dignity.

The past decade has been a trying time for Social Security. The early '80s saw both a genuine (though much exaggerated) fiscal crisis and the most serious ideological challenge of the program's lifetime. Critics claimed that Social Security was depressing private savings rates, overpaying the elderly (yet also somehow shortchanging them), and inviting fiscal collapse. Social Security weathered both attacks remarkably well, thanks to a bipartisan reform effort rooted politically in the program's own immense reservoir of popular support. By the late '80s, Social Security faced new challenges: an ingenious claim that the old were prospering at the expense of the young, and a growing surplus—a sign of fiscal health that now made the Social Security trust funds vulnerable in new ways. It appeared that, whether the program was in deficit or surplus, it remained an irresistible target.

Merton and Joan Broadshaug Bernstein are latter-day New Dealers, well known as students and advocates of Social Security. Merton Bernstein's *The Future of Private Pensions* (1964) is a classic. The Bernsteins are reminiscent of an earlier generation of socially conscientious scholars, meticulous in their technical work and resolute in their values. *Social Security: The System That Works* is a wonderfully convincing handbook. In unpretentious if occasionally dry language, they explain the logic of the system and rebut the naysayers.

The Bernsteins begin with a concise history of Social Security and its design. They provide well-turned material on how the system got into fiscal jeopardy and how it was repaired, as well as a fine comparison of Social Security and private pensions, and an unsentimental discussion of policy options for the future. They defend the Social Security ideal yet favor a series of effective refinements—a higher retirement age without a loss in benefits, a reform of the private pension system, and a broadening of social insurance to promote greater self-sufficiency in old age. Along the way is a wealth of detail that demolishes one myth after


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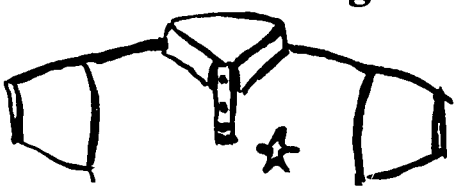

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another, including old favorites like the alleged negative effect of Social Security on the savings rate. They cite work by Franco Modigliani of MIT, Federal Reserve economist Alicia Munnell, and others, demonstrating that Social Security, by making possible the institution of retirement for working people, stimulates financial planning for that retirement, and far from displacing private saving actually encourages it. They also challenge the supposed superiority of means testing, the appeal of letting people opt out of the system to gamble on higher yields, and the alleged affluence of the elderly.

Are most elderly well off? According to the Bernsteins, exactly two percent of single people over 65 have total annual earnings exceeding $25,000. Only 11 percent of all elderly, mostly married couples, have incomes over $30,000. Six percent get more than half their income from private pensions. Although the mean (average) income of elderly households in 1983 was an impressive-sounding $21,420, that reflected the relatively small fraction of very well-to-do retired people. The median income was far less, and fully 60.8 percent had incomes of between $4,000 and $15,000 a year. For the bottom half of the income distribution, Social Security benefits are what keep old people out of poverty. Sixty-five percent of elderly households get more than half their income from Social Security. Accumulated wealth is far more unequal than income: while a small minority of the elderly have great wealth, the median financial wealth of retired people is just $1,500.

Is Social Security still in danger of insolvency? Believe it or not, the system's accumulated surplus is projected to peak at $9.6 trillion dollars in the year 2020 and expected to drop slowly thereafter. The Social Security surplus increasingly serves to offset the government deficit, which raises two important policy questions: Will that surplus place Social Security in political if not financial jeopardy? If the public sector, through Social Security, is used as a net source of savings, will that result in a greater fiscal drag than a private savings rate? The Social Security system will soon become the principal buyer of Treasury bonds—which is surely preferable to selling Treasury debt to the Bank of Japan. Given how critics of the system used to argue (spuriously) that Social Security depressed savings, it is a delightful irony that the Social Security system itself will be a major source of savings during the next three decades.

PERHAPS THE most illuminating part of the book is the Bernsteins' comparison of Social Security and private pensions. Both systems serve to supply retirement income; one is social and compulsory, the other private and voluntary. This offers almost a laboratory case of universal versus private social insurance.

Private pensions originated as selective inducements by employers to engender employee loyalty and to facilitate the task of easing out aging workers. Gradually, such pensions came to serve a de facto social function too. Today they are relied on for a portion of income in old age. The trouble, however, is that they are entirely unreliable. Employees switch jobs and lose pension credits. Some companies go bankrupt; others contrive barely legal schemes to raid private pension fund reserves. Still others decide the whole thing is more trouble than it's worth and terminate pensions. Only about one-third of all workers and one-fourth of current retirees have pension coverage at all. Only a tiny fraction of private pensions are indexed for inflation. As the Bernsteins suggest, there is a built-in conflict of interest between the corporate trustees of pension reserves and the employees on whose behalf the money is held in trust. And unlike Social Security, which is deliberately redistributive, private pension entitlements generally are tilted toward the more affluent members of the work force, both generally and within firms.

It is possible to devise regulatory remedies for some of these flaws, as the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) attempted unsuccessfully to do. But the result is an interminable tug-of-war over such arcana as vesting and funding formulas, the legal obligation of fiduciaries, and so on, which enriches mainly lawyers and pension fund managers (three-quarters of whom, incidentally, fail to beat the overall rate of return of the stock market). With over a trillion dollars in pension reserves tempting the sticky fingers of profit-maximizing managers, the regulations proliferate, though the regulated are usually a couple of steps ahead of the regulators.

Given that private pensions are voluntary—voluntary to the employer, that is—the task of regulating them is ultimately futile, since any employer has the choice of refusing to play. A presidential commission on pensions appointed by Jimmy Carter had the poor timing to tender its report in the early flush of the first Reagan administration. The commission's recommendation that the government require most corporations to offer pension plans met hoots of derision. And according to the Bernsteins, there is evidence that the cost of tax subsidy to private pensions—$64.3 billion this year—may actually exceed the net increase to private savings that pensions provide. All of this offers an epic illustration of just how poorly a private system serves a social objective. (Since 1980 private pension coverage has actually declined.)

As the Bernsteins remind us, none of these problems exists in the Social Security system. Social Security pensions are fully portable and fully indexed, vesting is immediate, it doesn't matter whether the former employer goes bankrupt or is taken over, and no conflict of interest exists between the custodians of the assets and the beneficiaries. As a program of social insurance, Social Security is anchored in the overall health of the economy, which gives a recipient a social claim on a fraction of national output in a manner that no private pension plan can.

The conflicts that do exist are, of course, political. There is democratic pulling and hauling between Social Security advocates and other claimants on the polity. There is ongoing debate about what level of taxes ought to pay for what level of benefits. But in the evolution of Social Security, the political system thus far has risen admirably to the challenge. We owe much to students of Social Security like the Bernsteins, for clarifying how social insurance actually operates, and for making invariably difficult choices at least enlightened ones.

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# HEROES AND ECHOES

## Tragedy: Shakespeare and the Greek Example
by Adrian Poole

Basil Blackwell, 272 pp., $24.95)

Everyone assumes that they know what tragedy means; the problem comes in trying to define it. One thing is certain: it is a uniquely Western phenomenon. None of the drama produced by the great cultures of India, China, or Japan has ever been remotely "tragic" in the most commonly accepted (if simplistic) sense of "sad stories of the death of kings." There is even a 15th-century No drama that presents the precise dilemma of Shakespeare's Hamlet—except that all ends well for the avenger, and he never has pangs of conscience or self-doubt.

Even the origin of the word "tragedy" is enigmatic. The Greek literally means "goat song." There have been three major theories as to what this originally meant. The first argues that in the dramatic (or pre-dramatic bardic) competition the animal itself, of no small value in ancient Greece, was the prize. The second explanation (endorsed by Aristotle) was that the genre evolved from the dithyrambic poets whose choruses were dressed in goat skins, an indication of its ultimate ancestry in fertility rites. (We know of a seventh-century poet named Arion, he of the dolphin's back, whose chorus sang "in the tragic mode.")

More recently, scholars such as Walter Burkert have argued that "tragedy" emerged from a tradition of goat sacrifices, which had an even earlier precedent with human victims. Though he has been able to distinguish the vestiges of the ritual in the dramas themselves, Burkert warns against seeking too literal an evolution: "The greatest poets only provide sublime expression for what already existed at the most primitive stages of human development. Human existence face-to-face with death—that is the kernel of *tragoidia*."

Thus we accept that the Greeks were the first to produce something called *tragoidia*, but we have no real idea what the term signified for Aeschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides. Indeed, it seems to have meant something different to each of them. For in the Golden Age of Athens, there were countless dramatists, but they were too busy writing plays to concern themselves with theory, mercifully.

To be sure, many of the extant plays present heroic agony and death, but there is strong evidence that this was not an obligatory criterion. In fact some of their most famous works—*Philoctetes* and *Alcestis* to name but two—end on harmonious (or at least optimistic) notes. Indeed, one scholar has likened the triumphal parade that concludes Aeschylus's *Oresteia* to the joyous finales of Aristophanic comedy. Moreover, there is the famous example of the tragedian Phrynicus, who, in 494 B.C., produced *The Fall of Miletus*. Its horrific ending evoked such sorrow in the audience that the author was fined and forbidden ever to produce the play again.

There is another popular misconception that "tragedies" end on a note of horrific calamity. A careful examination of some of the masterpieces shows that more often the catastrophe is followed by a sense of calm. The messenger in *Oedipus at Colonus* describes how the suffering king is translated into heaven: "No more sobs were heard, then there was silence." At the end of *King Lear* yet another suffering king is mercifully released from "the rack of this tough world." And we should also recall the epilogue to *Samson Agonistes*, which assures us that "nothing is here for tears."

A little more than a century later, Aristotle bestowed on the world the mixed blessing of explicit definition: the purpose of Tragedy was to provide a catharsis for the pity and the fear that it evoked. Centuries of subsequent critics have taken up, or taken issue with, various aspects of his formulation, but almost all agree with Aristotle's description of the tragic hero as one who endures nearly superhuman inner torment. Aristotle implied that Euripides killed tragedy.

There is a certain validity to all these arguments; rather than canceling one another out, they merely demonstrate the various and protean nature of tragedy. Happily, Adrian Poole is not concerned with the genre's state of health. He takes the more rewarding way of examining Shakespeare and Greek tragedy side by side, as what Matthew Arnold would call literary "touchstones." He argues that "the example of Shakespearean tragedy may help a modern reader to recognize, by analogy, the peril and originality at the heart of Greek tragedy, of all tragedy."

There is no direct link between these tragedians, of course, except in their greatness. Shakespeare, with his "small Latine," had read Seneca, but Greek was all but unknown in early Elizabethan England. (North's *Plutarch*, for example, is translated not from the original, but from the French of Amyot.) Still, even if there were nothing to be gained by a comparison that ignores the question of direct influence, Poole's study is a salutary welcome for scholars of English to extend their literary horizons.

Poole is a scholar whose literary explorations transcend barriers of time and place, and the provincialities of "national literature." Thus, in offering what he calls "exemplary partnerships," he examines the striking similarities in classical and Shakespearean drama in order to illuminate the nature of tragedy itself. Again and again we are startled by the uncanny coincidences of theme and language; and they are all the more startling since they are the results not of conscious emulation, but of similar leaps of imagination.

One chapter, for example, compares the *Oresteia* and *Macbeth*. For Poole, they are plays in which every action is motivated by what Wordsworth called the "anxiety of hope." At various stages in each drama, different characters pray that the murderous act just committed is the last in what has been a seemingly endless cycle of violence. And yet in both blood inevitably begets blood. The *Oresteia* and *Macbeth* both take place in an atmosphere best described by Aeschylus, in an adjective that he coined for his own trilogy: *nyktiplangkton*, "stricken with night." Both plays deal with the death of kings, not in the medieval sense, but as in the primal crime described by Freud in *Totem and Taboo*. In these works, the dread act is not so much regicide as patricide, and in the case of the *Oresteia*, matricide. (Poole argues, incidentally, that there are at least two important neologisms in *Macbeth*: the first recorded English use of the emotive words "assassination" and "multitudinous"—the latter in Lady Macbeth's fear that her tainted hand will make "the multitudinous seas incarnadine.")

Another of the many similarities between Shakespearean and Greek tragedy



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is the striking number of images of children and childbirth. Clytemnestra and Lady Macbeth both allude to their having "given suck" to babies. As Poole comments: "Not all tragedies are 'about' children and parents, but all tragedy draws on the models of belonging provided by our experience of family relations, the ones which tax most severely our powers of choice and reason."

IN ANOTHER example of his rewarding comparative approach, Poole contrasts Oedipus and Hamlet as "questioners." This notion has been articulated earlier, by Maynard Mack (who referred to Hamlet's world as being "pre-eminently in the interrogative mood"), by Harry Levin (who has devoted an entire book to *The Question of Hamlet*), and by Bernard Knox (who has discoursed on the intellectual inquiry that pervades *Oedipus Rex*). Still, Poole's discussion is replete with its own riches, such as his intriguing reformulation of Freud's famous theory that *Oedipus* dramatizes "the work of a psychoanalysis." Sophocles' Oedipus and Shakespeare's Hamlet are the two characters in tragic drama most actively engaged in analysis and interpretation. Their importance for Freud, Poole argues, has more to do with a passion for knowledge than with an occult or repressed guilt. Or rather, it is with their exploration of the mysterious relations between knowledge and guilt, a mystery that Freud radically simplifies by attributing guilt solely to the object of interpretation.

A few of Poole's chapters deal only with the Greeks, though the method remains the same. For example, he compares Sophocles' and Euripides' portrayals of Heracles and their differing perceptions of "coherence." This was Ezra Pound's term for tragic discovery: the crucial instant when the hero (or the heroine, as it is surprisingly often in Greek tragedy) suddenly realizes how the pieces fit together, and must face his "tragic" destiny. At this awesome moment, the protagonist often proves more "godlike" than the cruel divinities that shape his end. Take the conclusion of Euripides' *Heracles*, where Amphityron, marveling at the unspeakable agonies his heroic son has endured, exclaims "even a god would weep." Poole might also have adduced the example of Lear, holding the body of his beloved daughter, murmuring, "Upon such sacrifices my Cordelia, / The gods themselves throw incense."

The appeal of this book is its confrontation of two great literatures, the manner in which the classics are refracted through the sensibilities of a scholar informed with all of English literature. Poole makes us all the more aware of how profound are the classical resonances in what he calls "great rereadings"—such as Milton's poem on Alcestis, Wordsworth's on Philoctetes, or Browning's "Artemis Prologizes." As he argues, Milton's 29th sonnet ("Methought I saw my late espoused saint / brought to me like Alcestis from the grace") is, if anything, "more overtly tragic" than Euripides' play, because it emphasizes "the impossibility of possessing and retaining a perfect, ideal love in this world."

The discipline of comparative literature has yet to be fully legitimized by the mandarins of British letters. But when they next sit in judgment, they will have this splendid piece of scholarship as an argument for the defense.

**ERICH SEGAL**

Erich Segal is a fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford.

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 4*

Lewis manages to allocate approximately one-half of one sentence to this subject.

MICHAEL D. VINOCUR
*New Haven, Connecticut*

*To the editors:*

Michael M. Lewis points out that he's willing to accept "the possibility of a rare breed of elite altruists" (though he's not exactly brimming with faith) but argues that he is "wary of self-advertised elite altruists." If part of SOM's mission is to serve as a moral example to other schools and professionals, isn't self-promotion necessary to that end? SOM, at least on the face of it, not only seems to have offered to make the commitment to moral obligation, it seems to be taking real pride in it. If that is elitism, it certainly seems to be a special kind that is of more social utility than is bragging about one's income level or IQ scores.

The issue isn't whether SOM promotes its moral attributes, but whether it promotes them accurately and whether the attributes it promotes are in fact moral. Lewis cites nothing specifically that would question these issues; he just takes it as a truism that promoting one's own moral commitment necessarily reflects in sincerity about that commitment.

HOWARD I. SEIDE
*Boston, Massachusett*

## VOUCHER SYSTEM

*To the editors:*

In TNR's editorial "The Education Presi dent" (May 9), you commented that a system using education vouchers i viewed as a subsidy for upper-class, pri vate school families. But progressive voucher systems can be designed. School that accept vouchers can be required t accept them as full payment, thereby eliminating expensive private school from the subsidy. Also, a voucher system can require that a school accepting vouchers set aside, say, 25 percent of its places on a first come, first served basis for students from the bottom 25 percent of families by income. I believe that the true beneficiaries of a well-designed voucher system would be the poor families who today have little choice concerning their children's education.

DAVID NIELSEN
*Seattle, Washington*

## BETWEEN CHURCH AND FAITH

*To the editors:*

Morton M. Kondracke states that Michael Dukakis is not permitted to receive communion because "he married outside the Greek Orthodox Church" ("Grecian Formula," June 6), then notes that "two-thirds of all Greek-Americans now marry outside their faith." This juxtaposition creates the impression that marriage "outside the Church" and "outside the faith" are synonymous. Although the Orthodox Church encourages marriages between its own members, it will perform a marriage where only one of the parties is Orthodox, provided the other is a Christian baptized in the name of the Trinity. (This includes practically all Christians, except some fundamentalist groups who baptize in the name of Christ only.) Such a marriage is considered to be "outside the faith," but the Orthodox partner remains in full communion with the Church. However, the Church will not bless the marriage of an Orthodox and a non-Christian (the rationale being that the Christian sacraments, including marriage, are intended for Christians), and the marriage is considered "outside the Church," resulting in loss of access to the Orthodox sacraments, including communion. This is Dukakis's situation.

JOHANNA M. BABOUKIS
*St. Paul, Minnesota*



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# WASHINGTON DIARIST

## *Entertainment for Men*

I'D APPRECIATE IT if the following recommendation is greeted with a minimum of whistles, elbow digs, and Groucho Marx eyebrow flaps. Thank you. Now: check out *Penthouse* this month. It's interesting—and, in a reversal of the usual alibi for buying magazines of this genre, more for the pictures than for the articles. Guccione's boys have had the astute if obvious idea of engaging the services of Debra Murphree, the New Orleans prostitute whose trysts with Jimmy Swaggart got that aptly named evangelist in a world of trouble. In exchange for, presumably, some multiple of her usual $20 fee, Murphree has told all to *Penthouse*'s team of crack reporters, who have spread the results over seven full pages of dense print. Their revelations leave unchanged the broad outlines of what has already been reported in thousands of family newspapers. But the highly specific details do flesh out a tale of degradation, hypocrisy, greed, furtive lust, revenge, and pathos so stern in its relentless trajectory to destruction that no novelist would dare invent it (except that Sinclair Lewis already did). More to the point, Debra Murphree has also posed for a series of photographs in which she reproduces the pornographic (*Penthouse*'s word, and it is exact) poses it was Swaggart's custom to ask her to assume. These are published in a 16-page section that is sealed shut by a perforated strip, thus forcing the casual drugstore peruser to lay out $4.50 if he (or she) wishes to gratify his (or her) curiosity—a clever innovation in magazine marketing, one that no doubt will be widely imitated.

THE PICTURES show what Swaggart paid, first cheaply and then dearly, to see. Their chief interest, however, is not in what they have to say about Swaggart but in what they have to say about *Penthouse*. They are a devastating critique of the magazine in which they appear. The critique is clearest in the contrast between the pictures of Debra Murphree and the pictures of other naked women elsewhere in the magazine. The positions assumed by Murphree and by (for example) the "Pet of the Month" are identical. But while the pictures of the Pet are shot in lush color and she is bathed in soft, warm light, the pictures of Murphree are shot in harsh black and white in a brutal style reminiscent of the work of Diane Arbus. The Pet luxuriates on pastel satin sheets amid backgrounds of flowers and gilded antiques. Murphree lies on the coarse linen of a crummy motel bed in the light of an unshaded bulb hanging from the pasteboard ceiling. The Pet's skin is perfect and her makeup glistens. The pictures of Murphree deliberately emphasize her body hair, the pimples on her backside, the crude "Debbie" tattoo on her arm. The relation between the two sets of pictures is made explicit in a quote, supposedly a remark made by Swaggart to Murphree, that introduces the sealed section: "Pull your panties up your crack like a magazine I've seen . . ." The basic business purpose of magazines like *Penthouse*—which was also Murphree's business purpose, at least with her most famous client—is the provision of an aid to male masturbation in exchange for cash. What is unusual is that this should be so forthrightly acknowledged by one of the two leading "respectable" skin magazines, and that the acknowledgment should be in a context that so strongly stresses the sordid, degrading, and exploitative aspect of the transaction.

PLAYBOY, THE OTHER of the Big Two stroke books, also publishes a series of black-and-white photographs this month. These pictures too are of a naked woman. But the aim of the *Playboy* pictures—of Cindy Crawford, a beautiful *Vogue* model, taken by Herb Ritts, a well-known fashion photographer—is the opposite of that of the *Penthouse* ones. Where *Penthouse* uses black and white because it makes the pictures raw, ugly, and "realistic," *Playboy* uses black and white because it makes the pictures refined, pretty, and "artistic." *Playboy* has been trying for some years now to distance itself from the masturbatory nexus that called it and its competitors (notably *Penthouse*) into being. Hugh Hefner, the Founder, is in semi-retirement in California, and the now diminished empire is run out of the Playboy Building in Chicago by his daughter Christie, an intelligent woman of proclaimed feminist sympathies. Presumably as a result, *Playboy* has dropped the gassy blather about "philosophy," the ratings of porn videos, and the photos of Hef with pipe and bathrobe surrounded by off-duty Bunnies. *Playboy*'s pictures draw the line a bit closer than *Penthouse*'s, and the copy accompanying them is chock-a-block with girl-next-door banalities. (This month's Playmate likes rainy days, hates cruelty to animals.) *Playboy* tries to show its new attitude by publishing admiring articles about serious, accomplished women. All this is commendable enough in its tiny way. The problem is that because the magazine is no longer so stupid as to believe in itself and its mission, it has no spirit. Its smile is fixed, its eyes glassy, its cheeriness forced.

THE BIG SWAGGART-MURPHREE takeout was *Penthouse*'s revenge against *Playboy* for cornering the market, some months ago, on Jessica Hahn, the "church secretary" who defenestrated Jim Bakker. The synergistic parallels between the Bakker-Swaggart and *Playboy-Penthouse* rivalries are of course delicious, but the two magazines displayed their trophies in very different ways. *Playboy* chose to show Hahn in the Playmate style: wholesome outdoor backgrounds, frilly half-open dresses, flattering poses, airbrushed Kodachrome skin. Hahn is now installed in the Playboy Mansion West, reportedly recuperating from cosmetic surgery in preparation for another photo session. *Playboy*'s pictures of Hahn implicitly played to Bakker's fantasies, while *Penthouse*'s pictures of Murphree implicitly condemned Swaggart's (even as the rest of the magazine exemplified them). *Playboy* turned Hahn into a Stepford wife, a replicant who by now surely does love rainy days and hate cruelty to animals. *Penthouse* gave Murphree a check but left her in the gutter. *Playboy*'s hypocrisy was timorous and subtle; *Penthouse*'s is heedless and blatant. It's hard to know which approach is "preferable." As Gary Hart once said, let the people decide.

HENDRIK HERTZBERG



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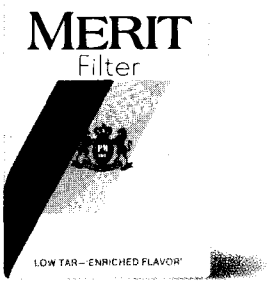


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